COMIC DUMP #3

IRON MAN NOIR
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HULK 2099
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AMOK IN L.A.
HULK 2099
HULK 2099
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CAN HULK 2099 A.D.
BEAT BOTH DOOM AND DRACO?
HULK 2099
DOOM MEETS HULK 2099
HULK 2099 A.D.
THE GAMMA BOMB
BATMAN BEYOND
BATMAN VS. BATMAN
BATMAN BEYOND
ERASED BY INQUE!
BATMAN BEYOND
SLICED BY THE SPLICERS!
BATMAN BEYOND
THE ROYAL FLUSH GANG DEALS...
TWO OF A KIND?
BATMAN BEYOND
SHRIEK BATMAN, SHRIEK!
BATMAN BEYOND
THE STALKER...
...AND HIS PREY!
BATMAN BEYOND
BATMAN BEYOND
VENDETTA STRIKES BACK!
SUPERMAN'S METROPOLIS
BATMAN NOSFERATU
WONDER WOMAN THE BLUE AMAZON
SUPERMAN BEYOND
A Tale of the BATMAN GOTHAM BY GASLIGHT
SUPERMAN SPEEDING BULLETS
GODZILLA KING OF THE MONSTERS
TRENDMASTERS COMIX
MONSTER ISLAND UNLEASHED!
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SUPER SONIC VS. HYPER KNUCKLES
IN THIS ISSUE:
"CRASH OF THE TITANS"
Script: Mike Gallagher
Penciling: Art Mawhinney
Inking: Rich Koslowski
"FATHERS & SONS"
Script: Mike Kanterovich & Ken Penders
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Archie ADVENTURE SERIES
NO.1
US $2.00 CAN $2.50
SUPER SONIC VS. HYPER KNUCKLES
48 PAGE COLLECTOR'S EDITION
DIRECT EDITION

this show
is so damn
good
MARVEL
HIT MONKEY
hulu

IRON MAN
MARVEL NOIR
#1
SCOTT SNYDER
MANUEL GARCIA
LORENZO RUGGIERO
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April 30th, 1939. Day 19 of our expedition into the white jungle of British Honduras.
IRON MAN: NOIR Part 1
WRITER: SCOTT SNYDER
PENCILER: MANUEL GARCIA
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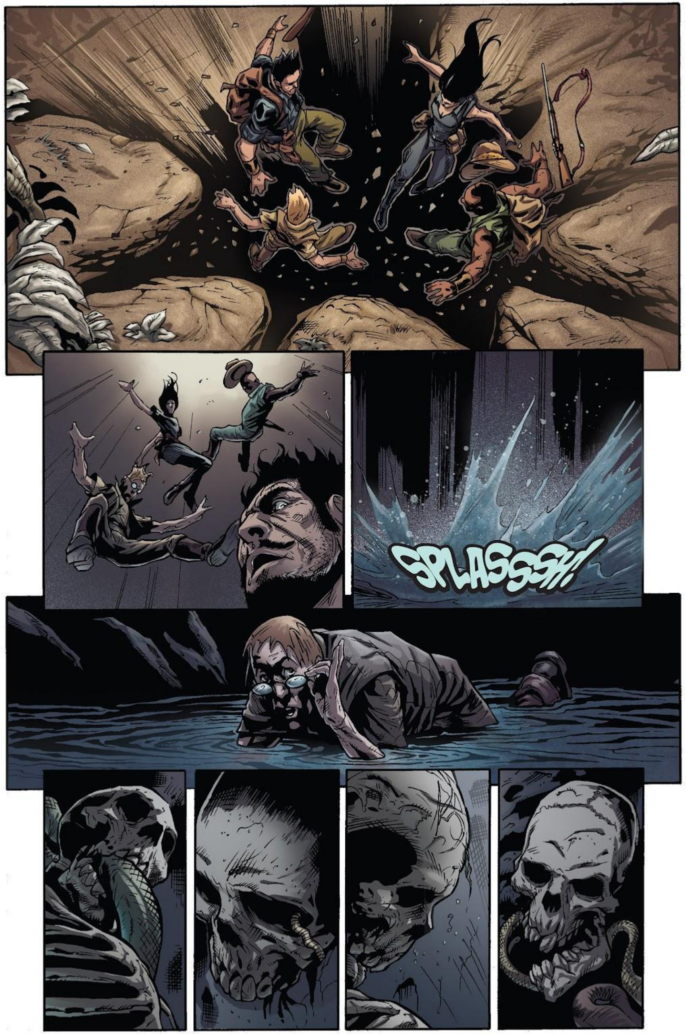
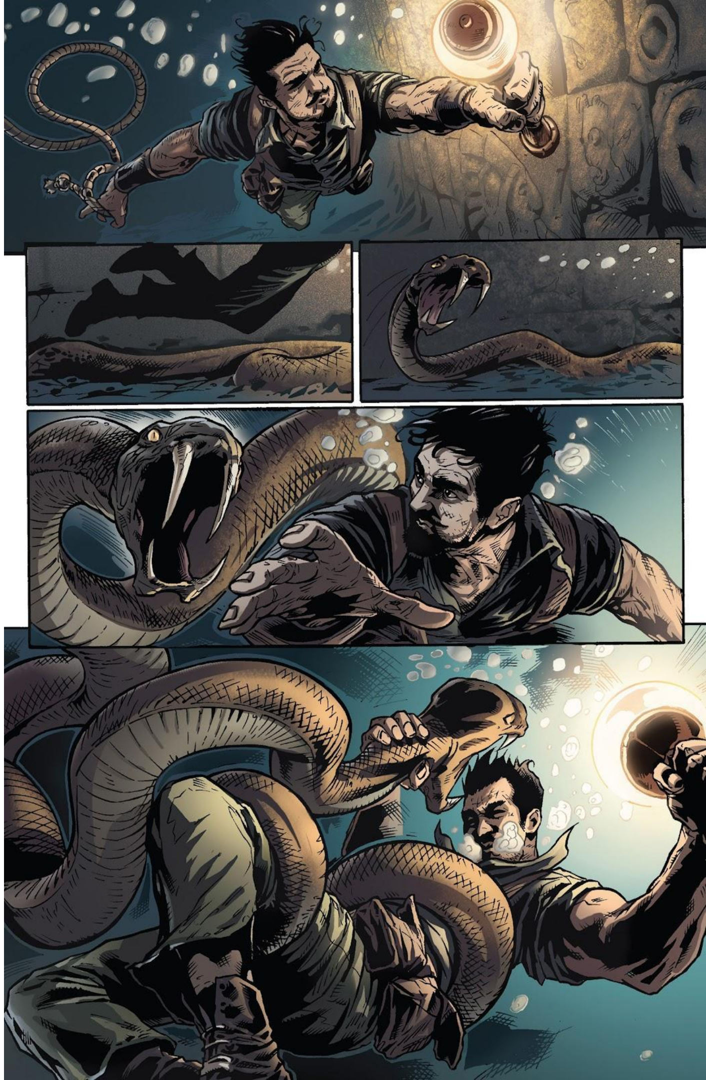
The last of our food ran out a week ago.
Three days ago, our trusted guide, Matlal, was gored to death by a feral boar.
Yet in the face of these admonishments from this pale and ghostly jungle, we press on.
The prize we seek: the fabled jade mask of the Mayan underworld. According to legend, the mask possesses extraordinary healing capabilities.
19 days...and still, our intrepid leader wears his confidence like a suit of armor.
BREAK OUT THE CHAMPAGNE, BOYS.

WE'RE HERE.
Tony Stark: billionaire scion of Stark Industries. genius inventor. And renowned adventurer.
James Rhodes: Stark's loyal aid. Encyclopedic in his knowledge of the natural world.
Dr. Gialetta Nefaria, Stark's assistant, fellow explorer, and longtime flame.
And myself, Virgil Munsey, Stark's regular chronicler for Marvels: A Magazine of Men's Adventure.
WHAT THE HELL IS THAT?
I'LL BE...
FRIENDS, MEET AH PUCH. MAYAN GOD OF THE DEAD.

DEAD END IS MORE LIKE IT. WHERE'S THE PASSAGE, TONY? THERE'S NOTHING HERE BUT DAMN ROCK! WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?
VIRGIL. I WASN'T FINISHED WITH INTRODUCTIONS.
THIS LITTLE GUY IS *PEQ KIMI*, HIS PUPPY.
THE MAYANS BELIEVED THAT WHEN YOU DIED, PEQ LED YOU TO THE UNDERWORLD WITH EYES OF FIRE, LIKE A GUIDE DOG. BUT YOU HAD TO GIVE HIM A BLOOD SACRIFICE.
YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS.
RUMMBLE
GOOD DOGGY.


SPLASSSH!

WELCOME TO THE AFTERLIFE, GANG.
WHICH WAY NOW?
MAYAN LEGEND HELD THAT UNDERGROUND WATERWAYS WERE THE CORRIDORS TO DIFFERENT PLANES OF THE AFTERLIFE.
WHICH MEANS...
WHICH MEANS I HOPE YOU BROUGHT YOUR SWIMSUITS.
HERE, TAKE THIS.
AND THIS...
TONY, BE CAREFUL.



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SO, YOU ALL SHINY AND NEW?
SAME OLD ME, I'M AFRAID.
WELL I LIKE YOU JUST THE WAY YOU ARE. HANDSOME, BRILLIANT...
...AND SO TRUSTING.
SORRY, TONY.
SO AM I.
YOU WERE A DAMN GOOD TYPIST.
OH, NOW DON'T BE SUCH A SORE LOSER.
DROP IT, LADY.
SIGH
RHODEY, RHODEY. SUCH A FRIEND TO TONY. IT ACTUALLY USED TO MAKE ME JEALOUS SOMETIMES. BUT THAT WAS BEFORE I MADE SOME NEW FRIENDS OF MY OWN...

TONY STARK. FANCY MEETING YOU HERE. FITTING THOUGH...
Dr. Heinrich Zemo! Chief of scientific research for the Nazi party. Or 'Nazi Doc of Death' for short!
And behind him, Commander Baron Strucker!
His cruelty is matched only by hi—
VIRGIL!
BLAM!
I'M AFRAID THE TIME FOR FAIRY TALES IS OVER, MR. STARK.
THE MASK, GIALETTA.

I'LL TAKE THAT NOW.
IT'S YOURS. YOU WEAR MASKS SO WELL, AFTER ALL.
AND YOU DON'T, MY DEAR? "TONY STARK, BRAVE ADVENTURER." BUT I'VE BEEN THERE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT, HAVEN'T I?
I KNOW BETTER. BECAUSE DEEP DOWN, YOU'RE JUST A SCARED LITTLE BOY, AREN'T YOU? RUNNING AND RUNNING. YES, I KNOW THAT HEART OF YOURS.
FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH SIR, I NEVER LIKED THAT ONE.
GOOD TO KNOW, RHODEY. BUT YOU COULD'VE TOLD ME EARLIER. AFTER ALL, I'VE LEARNED THAT WHEN YOU SAY SO...
I'D BE SMART TO JUMP SHIP!
FWOOOOSH
AAAARRRGHH!

STOP! STOP, YOU IDIOTS! YOU'LL CAUSE A CAVE-IN!
GIVE ME YOUR BLAST-KIT, QUICK!
RUMMMMMMMBBLLLLE

SIR, WHATEVER YOU'RE DOING, DO IT FAST.
GET READY TO HOLD YOUR BREATH.
GO GO GO!
BOOOM

YOU OKAY?
I'VE BEEN BETTER.
'ALLO? 'ALLO ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
HOW ABOUT NOW?

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SIR, THIS IS MS. PEPPER POTTS.
WAS I NOT CLEAR ABOUT THIS, RHODEY?
EXCUSE ME, SIR?
I SPECIFICALLY SAID NO MORE BEAUTIES FOR THE ASSISTANT POSITION. THAT MEANS NO MODELS, NO ACTRESSES, NO CIGARETTE GIRLS. DAMN WOLVES IN SILK STOCKINGS.
GOOD THING I'M NOT APPLYING FOR THE ASSISTANT POSITION THEN, MR. STARK.
SIR. SHE'S YOUR NEW CHRONICLER FOR THE MARVELS SERIES. MR. MUNSEY'S AGENCY SENT HER.
BUT YOU'RE A GIRL. AND MARVELS IS...
"A MAGAZINE OF MEN'S ADVENTURE." I KNOW. I WRITE UNDER A PEN NAME. FRANK FINLAY?
YOU'RE FRANK FINLAY.
IT'S PRETTY COMMON, MR. STARK. EVER HEARD OF NORMAN BRUNDAGE?
YOU'RE KIDDING.
MY ROOMMATE. JULIE. YOU'LL NOTICE I'M GOING FOR MY MASTERS IN JOURNALISM, MR. STARK.
JOURNALISM MASTERS PROGRAMS FOR WOMEN. WONDERFUL. I SHOULD DONATE TO YOUR DEPARTMENT.
YOU DID.
SO, WHEN DO I START?

STARK LAB
SO NORMAN BRUNDAGE WEARS A SKIRT. WONDERS NEVER CEASE.
DING
ON THE TABLE. NOW.

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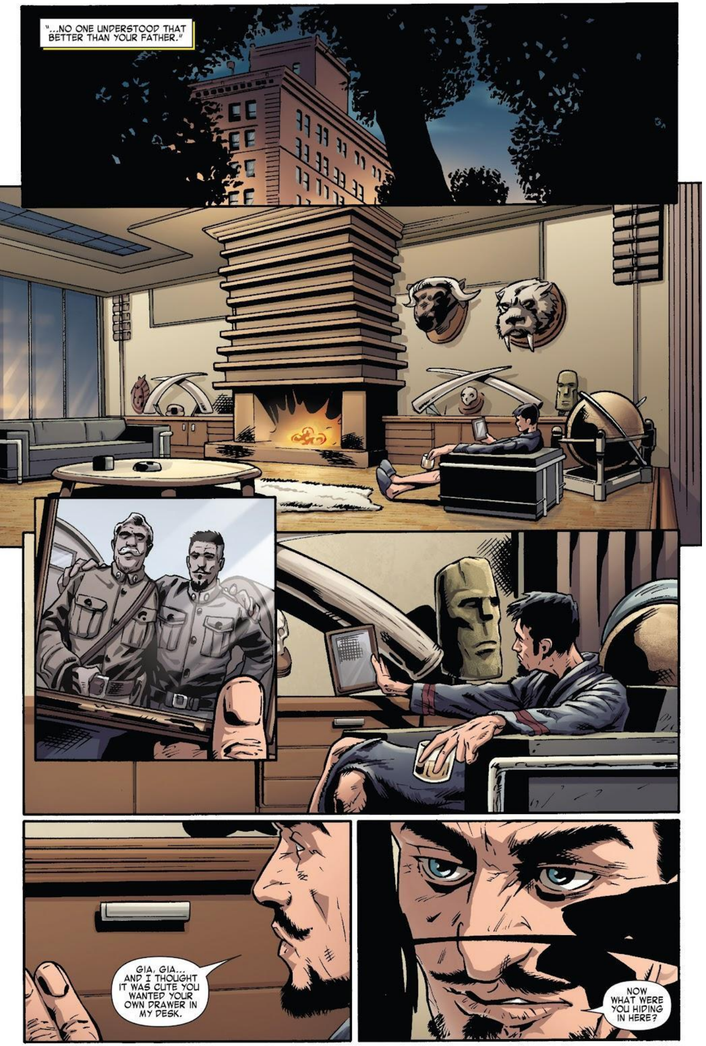
"...NO ONE UNDERSTOOD THAT BETTER THAN YOUR FATHER."
GIA, GIA... AND I THOUGHT IT WAS CUTE YOU WANTED YOUR OWN DRAWER IN MY DESK.
NOW WHAT WERE YOU HIDING IN HERE?

RING!
HELLO...
SIR, WE TALKED ABOUT THIS. MY DAY OFF MEANS--*WHAT?* SLOW DOWN. SHE HAD *WHAT* IN THE DRAWER?
AND YOU THINK THE RESEARCH IS SOUND.
LET'S JUST SAY I HOPE YOU HAVEN'T UNPACKED YOUR TRUNK YET, OLD FRIEND.
Atlantis 3-10-39
THE LOST CITY OF ATLANTIS
BECAUSE IT LOOKS LIKE WE'RE ABOUT TO GO ON THE ADVENTURE OF A LIFETIME.
TO BE CONTINUED...

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STARK

May 6th, 1939

Rhodey,

I'm afraid you're stuck as my assistant until we find a replacement for Gialetta. In the future, please refrain from employing persons so likely to be working with Nazis. Shame about that fire. She was a hell of a looker.

Debrief Miss Potts (or should I call her Frank Finlay? Great pseudonym, I think.) on Virgil's death and the Jade Mask debacle. If she's taking Virgil's place as the chronicler of my adventures, she needs to know what she's getting herself into. The magazine will want a draft of the account soon. Tell her to play up the evil and menace of Zemo and Baron Strucker. You know the sort of story readers like.

Drop a note to Jarvis telling him I'll be away. I have enough charge left in my heart for now. See if he can't make some improvements on the mechanized armor suit while we're gone.

Oh, and I'd pack an extra weapon if I were you. Since we're following intel found in Gialetta's files, I'd be prepared for anything. Atlantis. I hope Miss Potts doesn't mind getting wet.

Tony Stark

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PENCILER: Manuel Garcia
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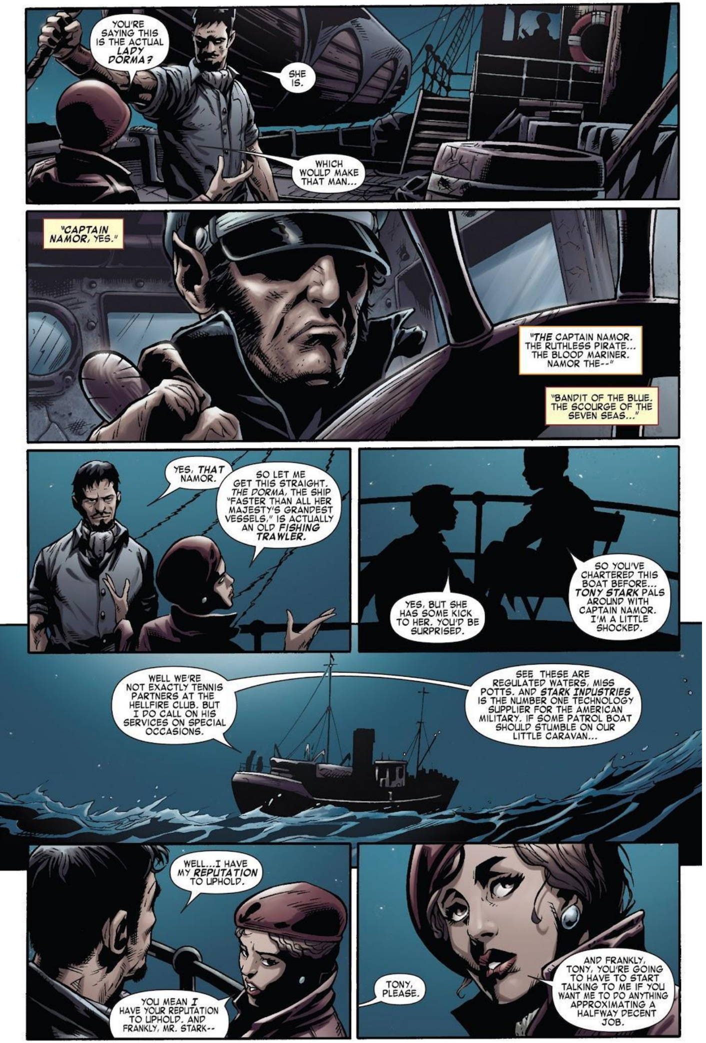

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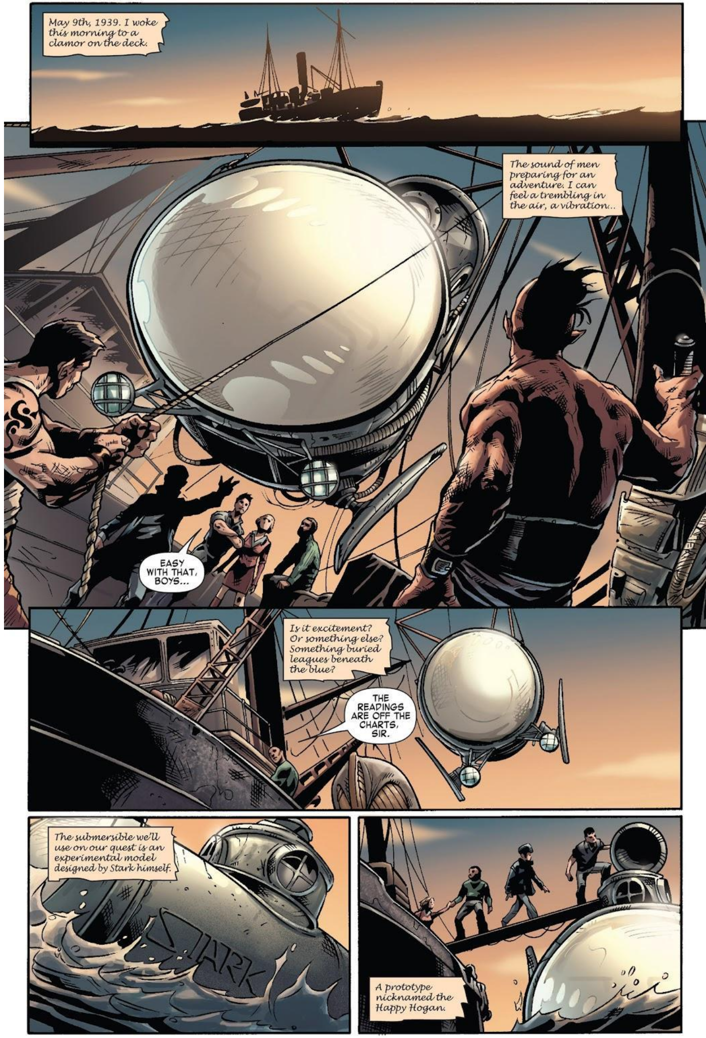
WHAT IS IT, CAPTAIN?
LOOK AT THE READING ON THE INDUCTOR.
FIVE-H? *ALREADY?*
FIVE-POINT-THREE.
AND WE'RE MORE THAN 100 KILOMETERS FROM THE DIVE SITE.
THERE MUST BE EVEN MORE THAN GIALETTA ANTICIPATED. AND I THOUGHT HER ESTIMATE WAS HIGH. LOOK AT THOSE NUMBERS!
JAMES AND I HAVE BEEN LOOKING AT THEM FOR THE PAST THIRTY MINUTES.
AND?
AND IF THEY'RE CORRECT...
...THE PRICE FOR OUR LITTLE PLEASURE CRUISE JUST WENT UP EXPONENTIALLY.
NAMOR, YOU GET US WITHIN A DIVING DISTANCE OF THE SITE, AND YOU CAN JUST ABOUT NAME YOUR PRICE.
NAME MY PRICE. IS THAT SO?
ACTUALLY, HE SAID *JUST ABOUT* NAME YOUR PRICE, MR. NAMOR.

FORGIVE MY RUDENESS, CAPTAIN. THIS IS PEPPER POTTS, OUR NEW STARK ADVENTURES WRITER.
CAPTAIN.
THIS IS VIRGIL'S REPLACEMENT? A *WOMAN?*
I KNOW I HAVE SOME BIG SHOES TO FILL, CAPTAIN NAMOR.
SHE'S A HELLUVA WRITER. BRASS TACKS.
THAT MAY BE. I AM A MAN OF THE SEA, WITH ALLEGIANCES TO NO COUNTRY. I DO, HOWEVER, KEEP ABREAST OF CURRENT EVENTS.
AND I WILL NOT PRETEND TO APPROVE OF HOW YOU AMERICANS SUDDENLY ALLOW YOUR WOMEN TO GO AROUND ACTING LIKE MEN.
NOW. I ESTIMATE OUR ARRIVAL TIME AROUND SIX IN THE MORNING. THE DORMA WILL REMAIN ON AUTOMATION UNTIL AN HOUR PRIOR. I'LL BE IN MY QUARTERS.
WHAT A CHARMER...AND HOW ABOUT THOSE EARS.
IT'S THE MARK OF HIS PIRATE CREW. THEY ALL DO IT. SLICE THEIR EARS TO LOOK LIKE SHARK'S FINS.
AN ECCENTRIC HE MAY BE, BUT HE'S ALSO RIGHT. WE SHOULD GET SOME REST.
FIRST TELL ME WHAT WERE YOU TWO TALKING ABOUT BEFORE? H'S AND INDUCTORS AND ALL THAT?
JUST SPECULATION. THAT'S ALL.
HEY. I'M NOT VIRGIL, REMEMBER?
ALL RIGHT. YOU TRY YOUR WHISKEY LEMON, AND I'LL DO MY BEST TO RUIN THE MYSTERY FOR YOU.

BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT THE CITY OF ATLANTIS HAS BECOME TO US OVER THE CENTURIES--A MYSTERY. A CONFUSING AMALGAM OF LEGENDS AND FOLKLORE ABOUT A CIVILIZATION LOST TO THE SEA.
BUT ATLANTIS, THE CITY, WASN'T ALWAYS SO SHROUDED IN MYSTERY.
ATLANTIS
"IN FACT, THE FIRST RECORDED ACCOUNT OF ATLANTIS, GIVEN BY PLATO HIMSELF, IS STARTLINGLY CLEAR ABOUT THE DOOMED KINGDOM.
"ACCORDING TO PLATO, ATLANTIS WAS BUILT ON AN ISLAND LOCATED JUST BESIDE THE PILLARS OF HERCULES--KNOWN NOW AS THE STRAITS OF GIBRALTAR--AROUND 300 BC.
"AND IT WAS A CIVILIZATION OF UNRIVALED BEAUTY. A MARBLE CITY WITH IRRIGATED CANALS, HANGING GARDENS. A CITY OF ART AND CULTURE...A CITY OF UNRIVALED POWER.
"ALL THE EARLY ACCOUNTS SUGGEST THAT THE CITY WAS SHOCKINGLY ADVANCED FOR THE PERIOD. THERE ARE EVEN HINTS THAT ATLANTIS HAD DISCOVERED A SECRET POWER SOURCE, SOMETHING THAT GAVE THE CITY WHAT ONE ANCIENT WRITER CALLED 'ETERNAL, FIRELESS LIGHT.'
"ELECTRICITY, IN 300 B.C. THAT DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE."
"YOU'RE RIGHT, IT DOESN'T. UNLESS YOU GO BACK TO THAT FIRST ACCOUNT. PLATO'S ORIGINAL DESCRIPTION AND READ VERY, VERY CLOSELY.
"IF YOU DO, MISS POTTS, IF YOU EXAMINE THE ORIGINAL TEXT, YOU'LL FIND BURIED IN HIS LIST OF THE CITY'S RICHES, A SINGLE MENTION OF SOMETHING CALLED ORICHALCUM."
"ORICHALC..."
"ORICHALCUM. 'THE METAL OF THE GODS.' THERE ARE REFERENCES TO IT IN A FEW OTHER ANCIENT TEXTS. APPARENTLY, IT WAS A METAL OF ENORMOUS POWER."
"HOW DO YOU MEAN, POWER?"
"THE DESCRIPTIONS OF THE METAL--THE WAY IT GLOWED LIKE LIGHTNING--HAVE LED SOME SCHOLARS TO BELIEVE THAT THE METAL WAS A KIND OF SUPER-CONDUCTOR. A POWER-ENHANCER."
"WHAT, LIKE AN AMPLIFIER?"
"EXACTLY. A METAL THAT AMPLIFIES POWER EXPONENTIALLY. ACCORDING TO ACCOUNTS, THERE WAS A TEMPLE AT THE CENTER OF THE CITY.
"...AND IN THE TEMPLE WAS A GREAT STATUE OF THE SEA-GOD POSEIDON. AND THE STATUE OF POSEIDON HELD A TRIDENT. AND THE END OF THAT TRIDENT WAS MADE OF--"
"ORICHALCUM..."
"SOME RESEARCHERS BELIEVE THAT THE METAL IS WHAT CAUSED THE CITY TO SINK. THAT THE ORICHALCUM WAS TOO POWERFUL A CONDUCTOR, AND EVENTUALLY CREATED A VORTEX THAT SUCKED THE WHOLE CITY UNDER THE WATER."

GOD. AND YOU WANT TO FIND THIS STUFF?
COME ON, MISS POTTS. CONSIDER THE POSSIBILITIES. IF ORICHALCUM IS AS POWERFUL AS THE OLD SCRIBES SUGGEST, THEN YOU COULD HOOK A COIL TO A CAR BATTERY AND POWER A WHOLE TOWN ON 12 VOLTS. MAYBE EVEN A CITY.
WE COULD SAVE MILLIONS ON ENERGY CONSUMPTION, NOT TO MENTION...WELL, LIKE I SAID, THE POSSIBILITIES ARE ENDLESS. SO YES, I WANT TO FIND THE STUFF.
AND THE READINGS BEFORE...
POINT TO SOME KIND OF ELECTRICAL SIGNAL EMITTING FROM A LOCATION LESS THAN THIRTY MILES OFF THE COAST OF THE STRAITS OF GIBRALTAR.
A METAL THAT CAN SINK CITIES... I CAN UNDERSTAND WHY MR. JARVIS WAS SO WORRIED WHEN WE SHIPPED OUT.
YOU HEARD THAT, EH?
THE TALK ABOUT RUSHING IN AND GETTING YOURSELF AND EVERYONE AROUND YOU KILLED? IT WAS HARD TO TUNE OUT.
JARVIS IS...OVER-PROTECTIVE.
THAT MAY BE, BUT WHY THE HURRY, TONY? WHY GO AFTER THE STUFF YOURSELF, LIKE THIS? WHY DO YOU WANT IT SO BAD? AREN'T YOU EVEN A LITTLE SCARED?
ON THE RECORD?
MISS POTTS, MY FATHER, HOWARD, HE WAS IN THE WAR-- FOUGHT IN THE ARGONNE FOREST WITH JARVIS. IN 1918, MY FATHER WAS CAPTURED BEHIND ENEMY LINES AND HELD IN A GERMAN P.O.W. CAMP FOR NEARLY SIX MONTHS. TORTURED. STARVED.
HE DIED WHEN I WAS STILL YOUNG, BUT I REMEMBER, HE USED TO HAVE THESE TERRIBLE WAKING NIGHTMARES. I'D WAKE UP TO HIM SCREAMING.
I'D RUN INTO HIS ROOM AND FIND HIM AWAKE AT HIS TABLE, FURIOUSLY WORKING ON SOME NEW INVENTION THAT MIGHT PREVENT MEN FROM EXPERIENCING WHAT HE HAD, A ROBOT THAT COULD FIGHT IN PLACE OF MEN. A REMOTE TANK...
I REMEMBER I'D ASK HIM IF HE WAS OKAY AND HE'D LOOK DOWN AT ME WITH THIS STRANGE FARAWAY EXPRESSION, LIKE I WASN'T REAL EXACTLY.
AND HE'D SAY: "I'M FINE SON. WHY DON'T YOU GO HAVE AN ADVENTURE, OKAY? GO HAVE AN ADVENTURE..."
SO I GUESS THE ANSWER IS NO. NO ADVENTURE SCARES ME VERY MUCH.
NOW. WE SHOULD TAKE NAMOR'S SAGE ADVICE AND GET SOME REST. I HOPE I'VE SUFFICIENTLY RUINED THE MYSTERY FOR YOU.
SORRY. NOT BY A LONG SHOT.

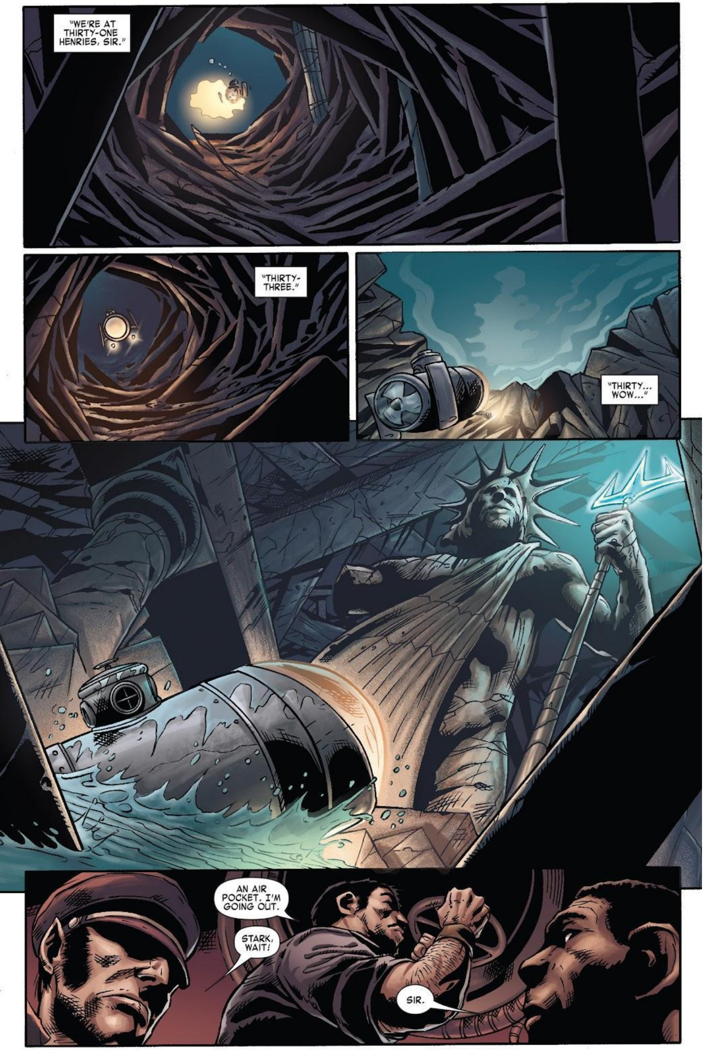

May 9th, 1939. I woke this morning to a clamor on the deck.
The sound of men preparing for an adventure. I can feel a trembling in the air, a vibration...
EASY WITH THAT, BOYS...
Is it excitement? Or something else? Something buried leagues beneath the blue?
THE READINGS ARE OFF THE CHARTS, SIR.
The submersible we'll use on our quest is an experimental model designed by Stark himself.
STARK
A prototype nicknamed the Happy Hogan.

It's capable of withstanding up to 4 tons of pressure per square inch...
GETTING WET IN 3, 2, 1...
...and can dive to depths of up to 6,000 feet.
Now, as the known world recedes above us...
...and we descend into the deep, as the waters darken around us...
...and strange, nightmarish creatures begin to appear...
...I can't help but feel that--
PAY ATTENTION, FINLAY...

"...YOU'RE MISSING THE SHOW."
MY GOD... THERE'S LIGHT COMING FROM BEHIND THAT RIDGE.
IT COULD BE NOTHING. FLUORESCENT JELLYFISH. CORAL.
NOT THIS DEEP.
BLAST!
FZZZZZ
WE'RE AT 26 HENRIES, SIR. WE'RE IN DANGER OF SHORTING OUT!
SHORTING OUT?!
TURN BACK, STARK. THIS IS FOOLISHNESS.
YOU'RE CAPTAIN ON THE DORMA, NAMOR. BUT DOWN HERE, I'M IN CHARGE. AND I SAY WE PRESS ON.
THEN TAKE US BACK TO THE DORMA AND COME BACK DOWN YOURSELF. WHY SHOULD WE DIE FOR YOUR WILD...

"...GOOSE...CHASE."

YOU WERE SAYING, CAPTAIN?
NAMOR?
IT'S...IT'S BEAUTIFUL.
THAT MOUNTAIN AT THE CITY CENTER. IT'S MADE OF SHIPS. THERE MUST BE HUNDREDS. FROM PRE-MODERN TIMES TO NOW.
IF THE ORICHALCUM IS AS CONDUCTIVE AS RECORDS SUGGEST, THEN ANY KIND OF ELECTRICAL STORM ON THE SURFACE, ANY KIND OF ABERRANT LIGHTNING, COULD ACTIVATE IT AND CAUSE A MINOR VORTEX.
TONY...
"TELL ME YOU CHECKED THE WEATHER REPORT?"
"WE'LL BE FINE, MISS POTTS. THE TEMPLE WAS AN UNDER-GROUND ALTAR, BUILT INTO THE BEDROCK."
IT SHOULD BE LOCATED DIRECTLY UNDER THE MOUNTAIN OF WRECKS. HERE, ON THE EASTERN SIDE.
"THERE, STARK. BENEATH THE GALLEON."
"AND IN WE GO..."



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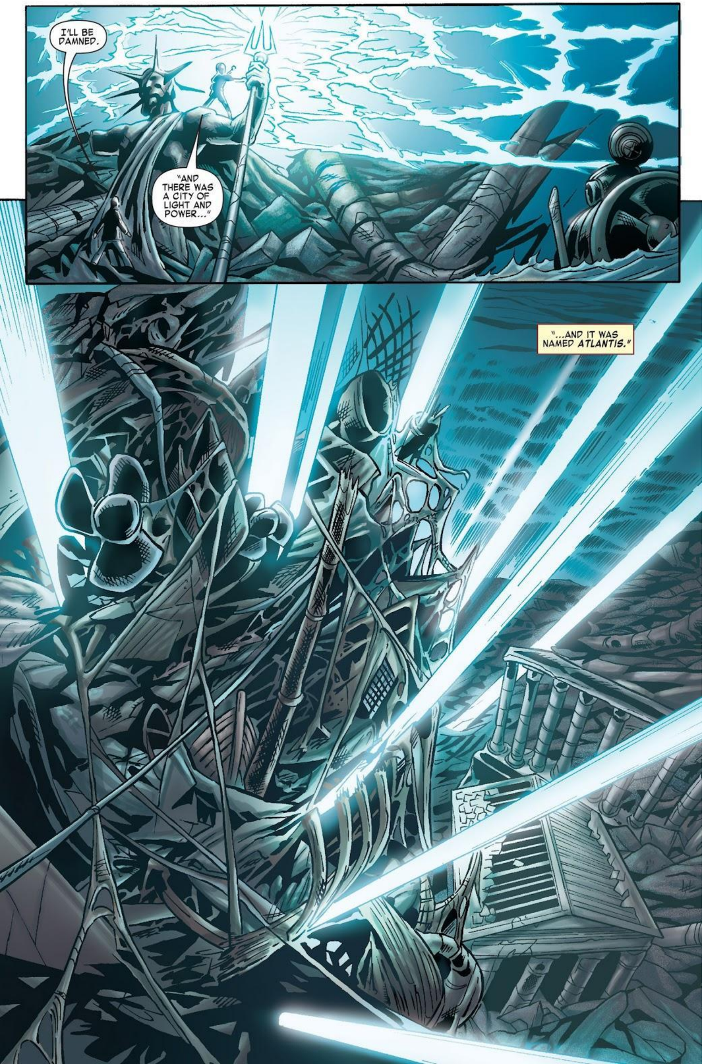

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...will come to an abrupt end.
MR. STARK. I SEE YOUR DIVE WAS FRUITFUL.
THE TRIDENT. NOW.
ZEMO, YOU'RE A SCIENTIST. LISTEN TO ME. THE TRIDENT, IT'S MORE POWERFUL THAN ANYTHING I ANTICIPATED.
THAT'S WHAT I'M COUNTING ON, MR. STARK.
TAKE IT!
TONY!
OOF!
WHUNK
YOU DON'T... YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DEALING WITH...
ON THE CONTRARY, MY DEAR.

WE KNOW *EXACTLY* WHAT WE'RE DEALING WITH. WE'VE KNOWN FROM THE START.
GIALETTA? MY GOD...
WE'RE DEALING WITH TONY STARK, HERO, FAMED ADVENTURER...
...AND FRIGHTENED LITTLE FOOL.
YOU... THIS WAS A SET-UP.
DIDN'T I TELL YOU, MY DEAR? I *KNOW* THAT LITTLE HEART OF YOURS. BUT I'LL ADMIT, THE DEPTHS OF YOUR EGOTISM SURPRISED EVEN ME.
AFTER ALL, I KNEW THAT IF I LEFT THOSE NOTES IN YOUR DESK, YOU'D COME AFTER THE TRIDENT IN HOPES OF FINDING SOMETHING TO KEEP THAT HEART OF YOURS TICKING...
...BUT EVEN *I* DIDN'T THINK YOU'D RUSH INTO THE TASK SO BRASHLY.
ENOUGH. LET'S KILL THEM AND BE DONE.
ON NAMOR'S SIGNAL, GRAB MISS POTTS AND RUN FOR THE HATCH.
I CAN STILL GET IT FROM HIM!
SIR. DON'T DO IT.
I CAN GET IT!
CLICK

FWASSSH
BLAM
LET GO, NAZI SCUM!
CRACK
THE TRIDENT...
COME ON!
WAIT! WHERE'S PEPPER?

WE DISABLED YOUR ENGINE. BUT JUST IN CASE YOU TRY TO GO DOWN WITH A FIGHT...
LET HER GO! YOU COWARDS!
LOOK ON THE BRIGHT SIDE, DEAR. MANY CULTURES CONSIDER DEATH TO BE THE GREATEST ADVENTURE OF ALL.
THEY'VE DESTROYED MY ENGINE.
WE'RE SITTING DUCKS, SIR.
THEY'RE PREPARING TO FIRE, CAPTAIN!
I'VE KILLED US. I'VE KILLED US ALL...

GOODBYE, MY DEAREST ENEMY.
NO!
BOOOOOM!
TO BE CONTINUED...

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STARK

May 20th, 1939

Jarvis,

I'm afraid Rhodey is stuck as my assistant until we find a replacement for Gialetta. In the future, I'll make sure to have him refrain from employing persons secretly working with Nazis like Zemo and Baron Strucker. Shame about that fire. But the jade mask that she now wears to cover her scars isn't doing her any favors.

Miss Potts has proven to be a quite capable replacement for Virgil. It seems that his untimely death hasn't deterred her from her job as chronicler of my adventures. Which makes her recent capture by the Nazis all the more regrettable. But I'll get to that in a moment.

Our recent adventure to Atlantis has hit a few snags to say the least. Rhodey, Miss Potts and I along with the enigmatic pirate known as Captain Namor managed to reach the fabled city and acquire the mysterious metal called Orichalcum, the one substance that can hopefully provide us with the energy source we need to power my failing mechanical heart. But upon reaching the surface with our treasure, we were ambushed by Zemo and his cronies leading to the aforementioned capture of Miss Potts, the theft of the Orichalcum and the explosion of our vessel along with everyone on board...

How did I survive? You'll have to read on to find out. I've attached a book of sequential pictures documenting the next chapter of our adventure...

Tony Stark

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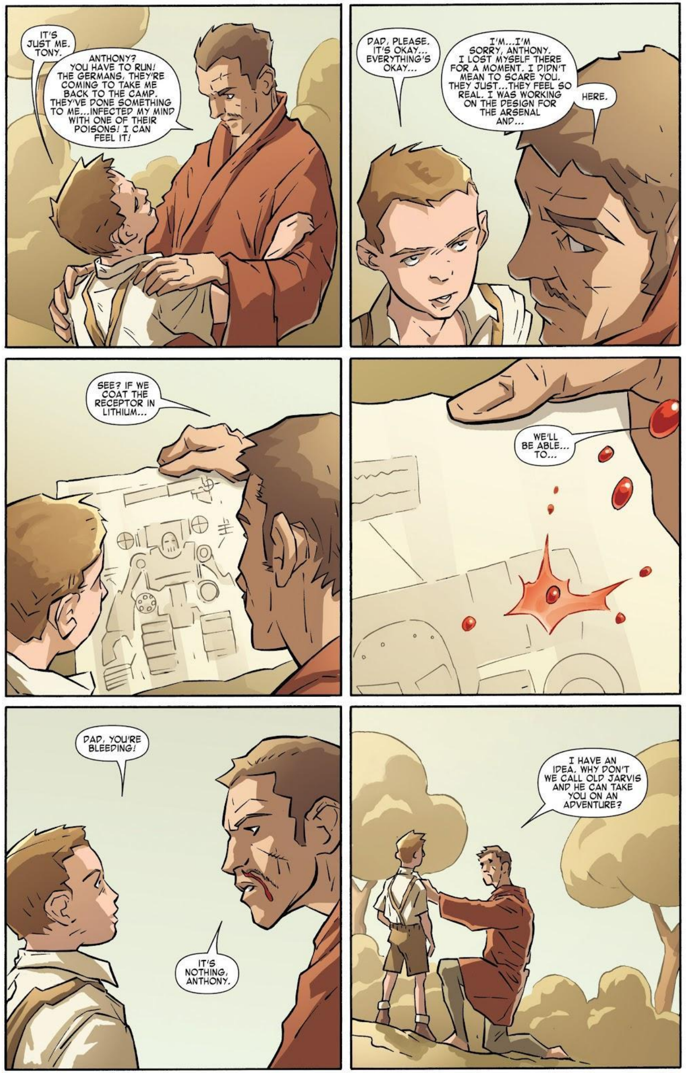
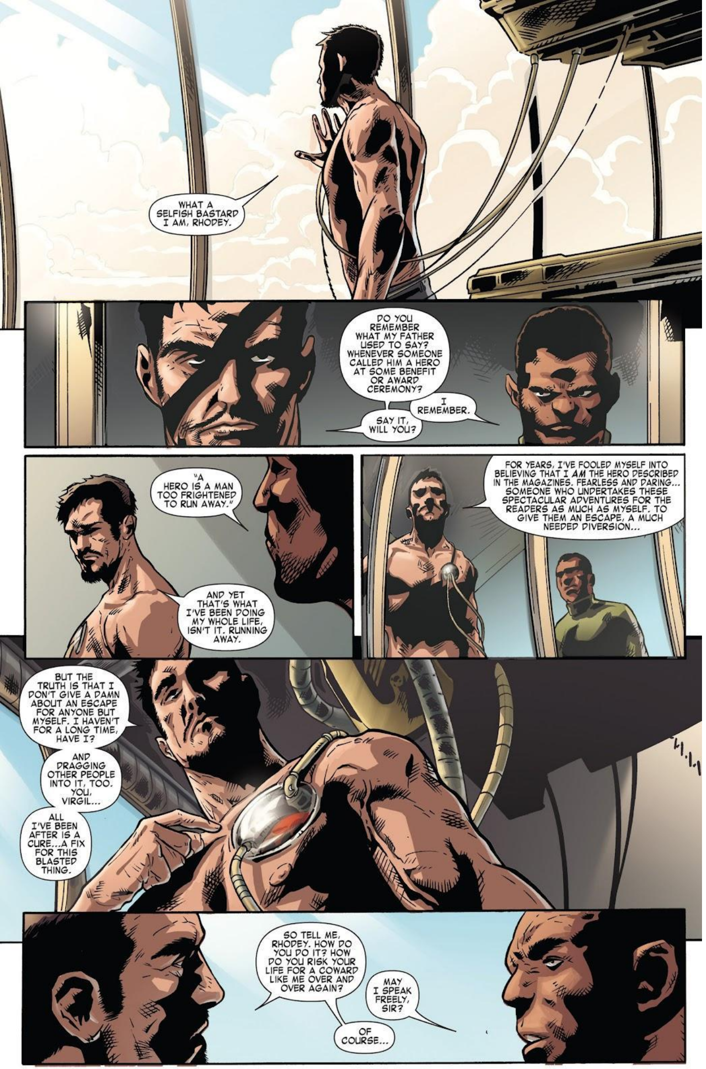
YOU OWE ME A NEW COVER BOAT, STARK. YOU NEARLY KILLED US ALL WITH THAT STUNT OF YOURS.
IT'S MY FAULT...
STARK?
HIS HEART! GET TO THE SURFACE!
SIR... TONY!

"GET READY TO DIE...
"UNLESS, OF COURSE, YOU'RE WILLING TO TALK, MANDARIN."
NOW WHERE ARE THE DOCUMENTS, YOU FIEND? NOT TALKING, EH? WELL PREPARE TO--
AAAIIEEE!
NO... NO...STAY AWAY!
DAD!
GET AWAY FROM ME!


IT'S JUST ME. TONY.
ANTHONY? YOU HAVE TO RUN! THE GERMANS, THEY'RE COMING TO TAKE ME BACK TO THE CAMP. THEY'VE DONE SOMETHING TO ME...INFECTED MY MIND WITH ONE OF THEIR POISONS! I CAN FEEL IT!
DAD, PLEASE. IT'S OKAY... EVERYTHING'S OKAY...
I'M...I'M SORRY, ANTHONY. I LOST MYSELF THERE FOR A MOMENT. I DIDN'T MEAN TO SCARE YOU. THEY JUST...THEY FEEL SO REAL. I WAS WORKING ON THE DESIGN FOR THE ARSENAL AND...
HERE.
SEE? IF WE COAT THE RECEPTOR IN LITHIUM...
WE'LL BE ABLE... TO...
DAD, YOU'RE BLEEDING!
IT'S NOTHING, ANTHONY.
I HAVE AN IDEA. WHY DON'T WE CALL OLD JARVIS AND HE CAN TAKE YOU ON AN ADVENTURE?

COME ON, TONY. COME ON...
NNNNN.-.
RELAX. YOU'RE ON OUR AIRSHIP. THOUGH YOU MADE IT BY A BLOODY CAT'S HAIR THIS TIME.
THE TRIDENT... AND PEPPER...I HAVE TO--
TAKE IT EASY, IS WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO. YOU RAN THE DAMN REPULSOR DOWN TO LESS THAN 5 PERCENT, YOU KNOW THAT? YOU'RE IN NO SHAPE.
I'M GOING TO CHECK ON THE MILEAGE TO AMERICAN AIRSPACE. YOU LET THE PUMP DO ITS WORK.
NAMOR?
HE'S FINE...
HATEFUL, BUT FINE.


WHAT A SELFISH BASTARD I AM, RHODEY.
DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT MY FATHER USED TO SAY? WHENEVER SOMEONE CALLED HIM A HERO AT SOME BENEFIT OR AWARD CEREMONY?
I REMEMBER.
SAY IT, WILL YOU?
"A HERO IS A MAN TOO FRIGHTENED TO RUN AWAY."
AND YET THAT'S WHAT I'VE BEEN DOING MY WHOLE LIFE, ISN'T IT. RUNNING AWAY.
FOR YEARS, I'VE FOOLED MYSELF INTO BELIEVING THAT I *AM* THE HERO DESCRIBED IN THE MAGAZINES. FEARLESS AND DARING... SOMEONE WHO UNDERTAKES THESE SPECTACULAR ADVENTURES FOR THE READERS AS MUCH AS MYSELF, TO GIVE THEM AN ESCAPE, A MUCH NEEDED DIVERSION...
BUT THE TRUTH IS THAT I DON'T GIVE A DAMN ABOUT AN ESCAPE FOR ANYONE BUT MYSELF. I HAVEN'T FOR A LONG TIME, HAVE I?
AND DRAGGING OTHER PEOPLE INTO IT, TOO. YOU, VIRGIL...
ALL I'VE BEEN AFTER IS A CURE...A FIX FOR THIS BLASTED THING.
SO TELL ME, RHODEY. HOW DO YOU DO IT? HOW DO YOU RISK YOUR LIFE FOR A COWARD LIKE ME OVER AND OVER AGAIN?
MAY I SPEAK FREELY, SIR?
OF COURSE...

FRANKLY, TONY, I CAN'T ANYMORE.
I PUT IN FOR A TRANSFER WITH JARVIS A FEW MONTHS BACK. AND TWO WEEKS AGO, HE FOUND ME SOMETHING IN THE HOSPITALITY DIVISION OF THE PARIS ARM.
PARIS? YOU'RE KIDDING.
I TOLD MYSELF I SHOULD BE HAPPY WITH THIS. I HAVE A GOOD LIFE. I'M *LUCKY*.
BUT IT RUBS OFF ON ME, TONY, THE FEAR. I CAN'T HAVE THAT.
IT USED TO BE DIFFERENT, THOUGH. DON'T CONVINCE YOURSELF IT DIDN'T. I'M TALKING ABOUT A LONG TIME AGO, BEFORE YOUR HEART WAS THIS BAD, BUT STILL.
WHEN I FIRST STARTED WITH YOU, ON THAT TRIP TO THE ANDES IN '29? OR THE DIG IN JORDAN? REMEMBER THAT?
I'M STILL PICKING THE SAND OUT OF MY TEETH.
WE DID HAVE SOME TIMES.
YOU WERE A TRULY FEARLESS SON-OF-A-BITCH BACK THEN, TONY STARK. IT WAS INSPIRING TO BE AROUND. MADE ME BRAVE.
AND TO MAKE A MAN BRAVE IN TIMES LIKE THESE--ESPECIALLY A MAN MY HUE--THAT'S SOMETHING. THAT'S HEROIC.
THE REAL QUESTION IS WHICH ONE OF US IS BRAVE ENOUGH TO TELL OLD JARVIS TO TURN THIS DAMN SHIP AROUND.

HAVE YOU GONE $#%&*! MAD?
YOUR HEART CAN BARELY HOLD UP YOUR SKINNY ARSE. YOU PUT THAT THING ON, YOU'LL EXHAUST YOURSELF IN LESS THAN A MINUTE.
AND WITH A FULL CHARGE?
USELESS. YOU'D LAST A FEW HOURS--THREE, MAYBE FOUR, BEFORE YOUR CARDIAC SYSTEM GAVE OUT COMPLETELY. LEFT YOU STANDING LIKE A RUSTED TIN MAN.
WHAT ABOUT WITH A BOOSTER CHARGE. SAY 115%.
FOUR HOURS, TWENTY MINUTES MORE THAN THAT, MAYBE. BUT FOR ALL I KNOW YOU COULD SHORT-CIRCUIT THE CROSS-JOINT. BLOW THE WHOLE REPULSOR TO HELL.
FOUR-AND-A-HALF HOURS? IN AND OUT.
FOUR AND TWENTY, ONLY IF YOU DON'T SUSTAIN ANY DAMAGE. AND THEN YOU COLLAPSE. DEAD, ANTHONY.
FOR A LONG TIME YOU'VE BEEN TELLING ME STOP BEING SO RECKLESS, JARVIS. WELL--THIS IS ME STOPPING. THE NAZIS HAVE THE TRIDENT, AND PEPPER, BECAUSE OF ME. I'M GOING TO GET THEM BACK.
NOW GET THE CHARGE READY. THAT'S AN ORDER.
ATTA BOY.

"WE'VE TRACKED THE SUB TO A SMALL BEACH NEAR THE CITY OF ERTZ, ON THE WESTERN COAST. THE TERRITORY IS LARGELY UNINHABITED--MOUNTAINOUS AND HARSH. THERE'S ONLY ONE OUTPOST WE KNOW OF IN THE AREA.
"CASTLE DONAR. THE PLACE WAS THE SUMMER HOME OF A PROMINENT NORWEGIAN FAMILY UNTIL THE REICH TOOK IT OVER TWO YEARS AGO, MADE IT INTO ZEMO'S PRIVATE RETREAT AND LABORATORY."
THE PLACE IS ISOLATED, ONLY ROADS IN ARE NARROW AND OUTDATED. THERE'S AN OLD RAIL SYSTEM, BUT INTEL SUGGESTS IT'S NOT SUFFICIENT FOR TRANSPORTING SOMETHING AS DELICATE AND VOLATILE AS THE TRIDENT.
MY GUESS IS STRUCKER, ZEMO AND THE REST ARE HOLING UP AT THE CASTLE TO WAIT FOR THE HIGHER-UPS TO ARRIVE AND EXTRACT THE THING UNDER FULL PROTECTION OF THE REICH.
WHICH MEANS WE NEED TO ACT NOW, BEFORE THAT PROTECTIONS ARRIVES.
WE'RE APPROACHING AT 35,000 FEET TO GIVE YOU BOTH THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE. USE STEALTH UNTIL ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY.

THIS IS THE JRXL-1000?
IT'S LIGHTWEIGHT, RESILIENT PLATE MAIL.
THERE'S A PROPULSION SYSTEM ON THE BACK THAT'LL ALLOW YOU TO JUMP WITHOUT A CHUTE, SAME AS THE X-STREAM.
WE'RE NEARLY AT THE DROP SITE, SIR.
YOU'RE SURE ABOUT THIS.
PLUG ME IN, YOU OLD COOT.
CHARGING FOR 115%.
120%.
COME ON, ANTHONY--
125%. ARGUE AGAIN AND IT'LL BE 130%.
THIS IS GOING TO PINCH A BIT.

NNNHH!
YOU CAN SCREAM, DARLING. NO ONE WILL THINK ANY LESS OF YOU.
$*8% YOU, YOU WITCH.
MANNERS, MANNERS, MISS POTTS.
ZEMO...
THE CARAVAN IS ALREADY EN ROUTE. THEY SHOULD ARRIVE, WEATHER PERMITTING, IN LESS THAN AN HOUR.
PERFECT.
THEY'RE WORRIED ABOUT TRANSPORTING THE THING, THOUGH. THEY FEAR ITS POTENTIAL.
NONSENSE. THE TRIDENT IS ONLY DANGEROUS EXPOSED TO THE ATMOSPHERE.
AND THE CASE I DESIGNED IS A DISTILLED AND CRYSTALLIZED RUBBER.
THEY'LL STOP YOU... THE ALLIES.

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YOU READY?
AFTER YOU.
KNOCK, KNOCK.
BOOM!

AND YOU WERE GOING TO TRANSFER TO PARIS.

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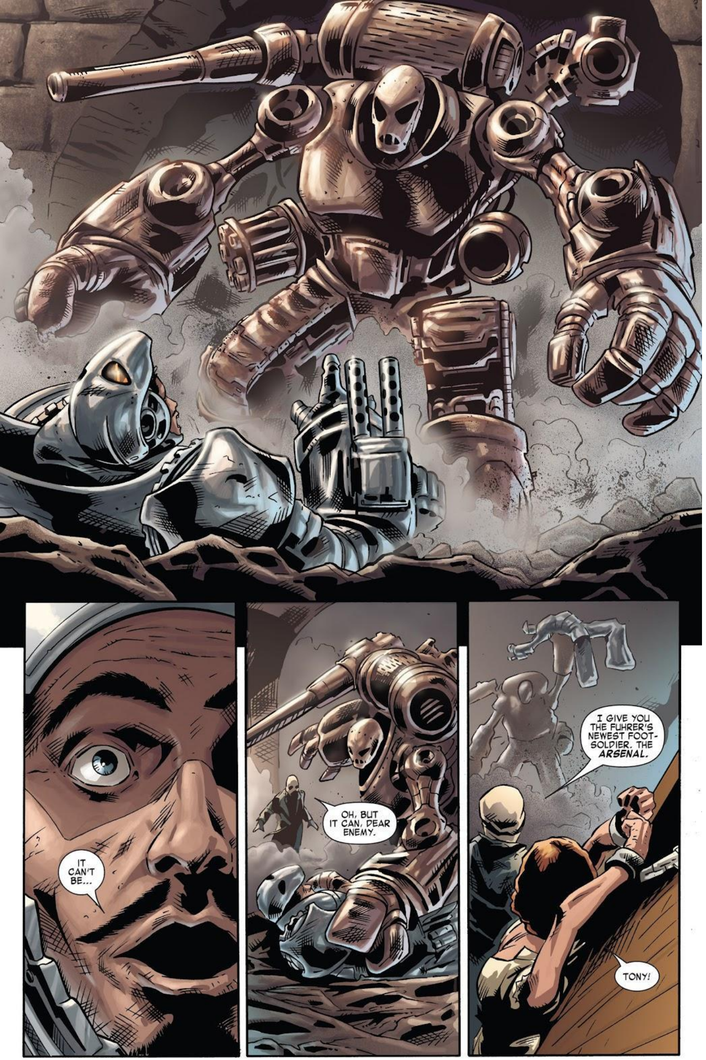
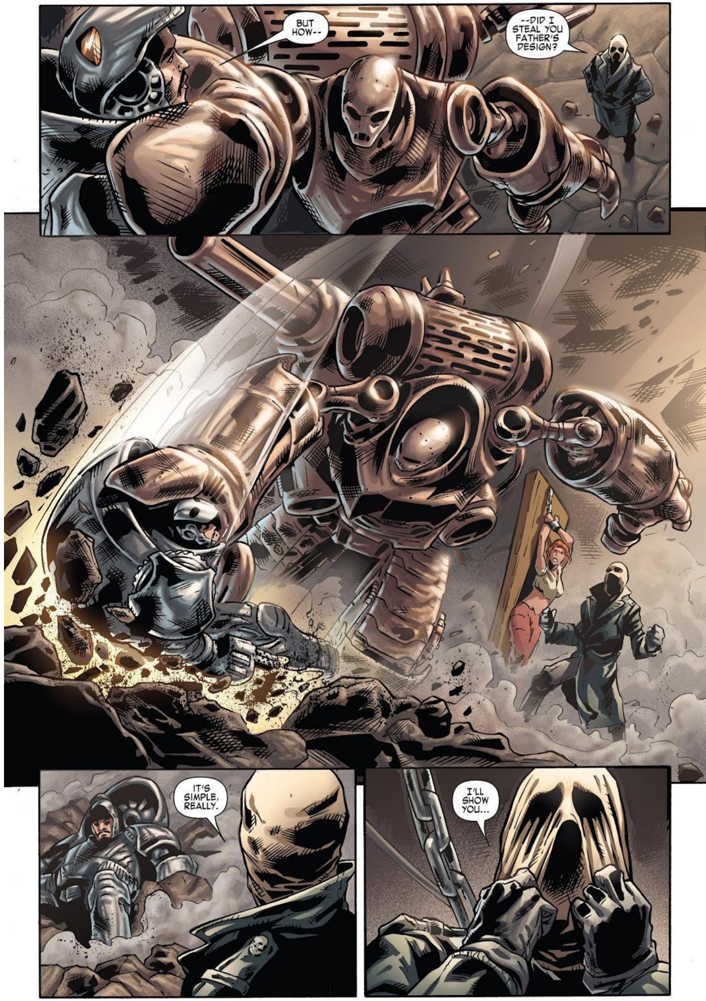
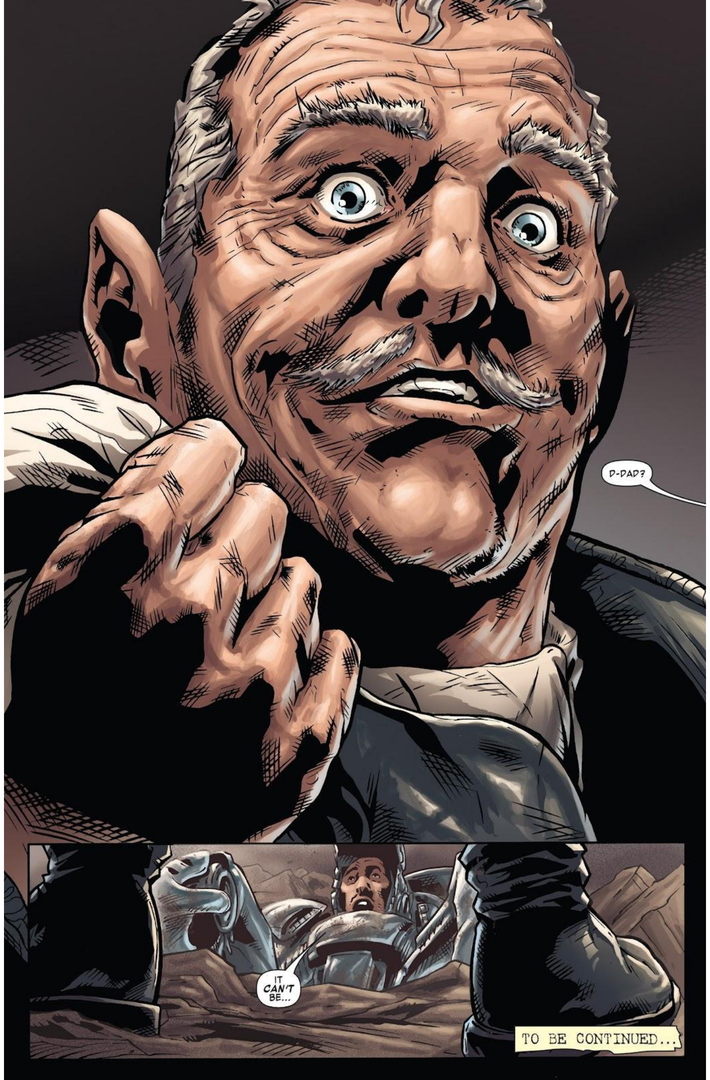

IT CAN'T BE...
OH, BUT IT CAN, DEAR ENEMY.
I GIVE YOU THE FUHRER'S NEWEST FOOT-SOLDIER. THE *ARSENAL.*
TONY!


BUT HOW--
--DID I STEAL YOU FATHER'S DESIGN?
IT'S SIMPLE, REALLY.
I'LL SHOW YOU...


D-DAD?
IT CAN'T BE...
TO BE CONTINUED...

IRON MAN
MARVEL
NOIR
#4
SCOTT SNYDER
MANUEL GARCIA
LORENZO RUGGIERO
MARTA MARTINEZ
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STARK

May 22nd, 1939

To whom it may concern,

By the time you read this it is very likely that I will be dead. Let the following stand as a record of my final moments and those of my colleagues. I'd hate to leave the world in the dark on what is sure to be my last great adventure.

What you may not realize is that the purpose of my many exploits has been to locate a power source for my failing mechanical heart. I thought I had found the answer in the form of an ancient jade mask but my then assistant, Gialetta, betrayed us and stole the mask. It turns out that she had been secretly working for the Nazi scientists Zemo and Baron Strucker the whole time. My comrades managed to escape their clutches but Virgil, the chronicler of my adventures, was killed in the process. He was then replaced with the beautiful Pepper Potts and my close friend Rhodey replaced Gialetta as my assistant.

Shortly thereafter we found ourselves on a journey to Atlantis with the help of the infamous pirate known as Namor. There we sought the mysterious metal called Orichalcum, the one substance that could hopefully provide us with the energy source I needed. But upon reaching the surface with our treasure, we were ambushed by Zemo and his cronies leading to the capture of Miss Potts, the theft of the trident-shaped Orichalcum and the explosion of our vessel.

Fortunately Namor was able to spirit us out of harm's way with one of his wondrous submersibles. My mentor Jarvis and I were then able to piece together a limited lithium-based power source from my deceased father's notes. One strong enough to briefly power my heart and suits of futuristic armor designed by my father that allowed Rhodey and I to mount an assault on the Nazi stronghold. The mission seemed to be going well. Pepper was as good as saved when we were ambushed by a new Nazi weapon called an "Arsenal." Its design was eerily similar to the design of our armored suits. And I soon discovered why when Zemo pulled off his mask, revealing the face of my father...

Tony Stark

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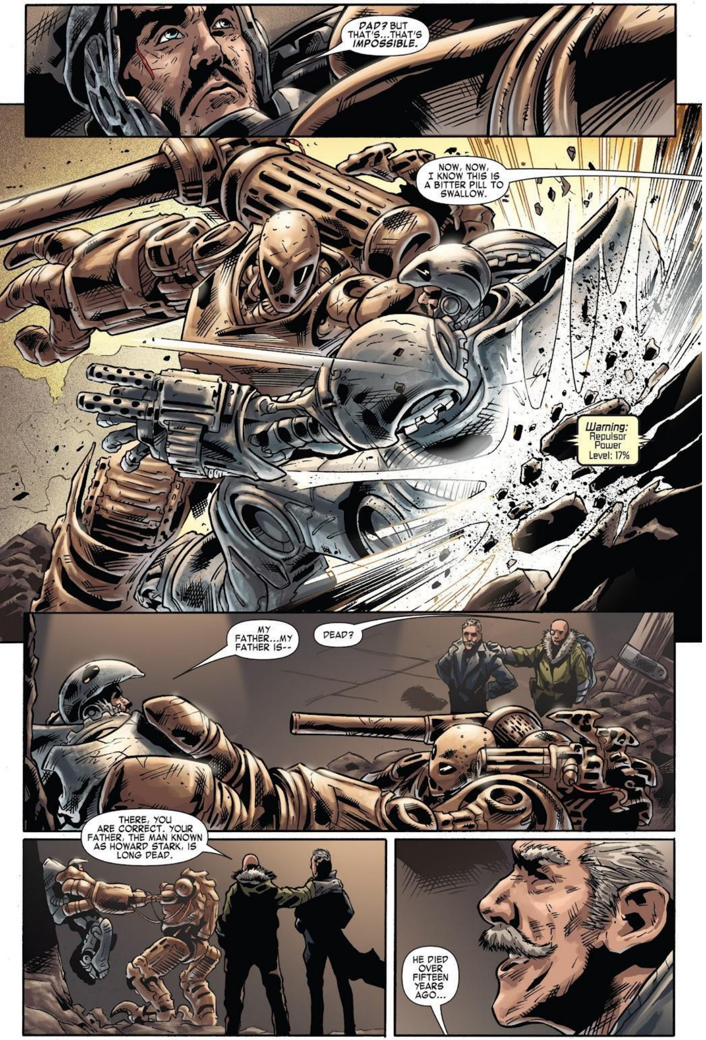

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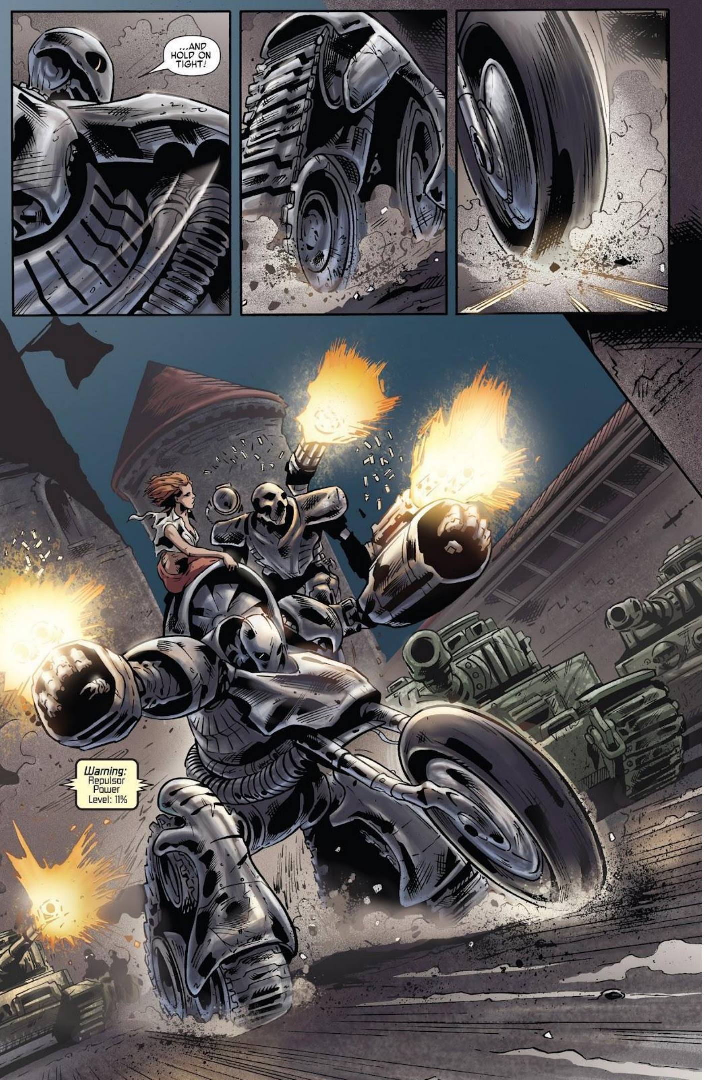
YOU EGOTISTICAL FOOL!
CLANG!
YOU THINK YOU'RE A *HERO*, TONY? YOU'RE NOTHING BUT A CHILD, A SPOILED, AMERICAN, SELF-INDULGENT--
THAT'S FOR VIRGIL. HE NEVER LIKED YOU EITHER.
WHERE TO? THERE'S NO WAY OUT.
I GUESS WE'LL HAVE TO MAKE OUR OWN.

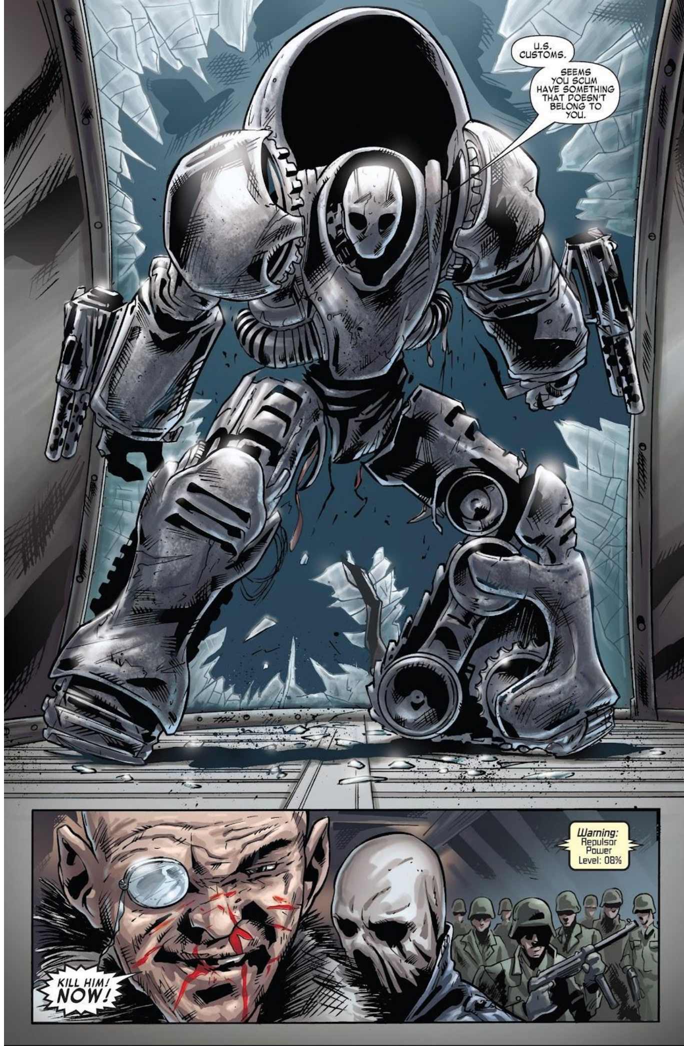
HALT OR WE SHOOT!
WHAT NOW?
NOW YOU FASTEN YOUR SEATBELT...


...AND HOLD ON TIGHT!
Warning: Repulsor Power Level: 11%

TONY, I'M SURE YOU THOUGHT OF THIS...
...BUT THIS ROAD--IT ENDS AT THE CLIFFS!
EXACTLY!

TOOK YOU BLOODY LONG ENOUGH!
GET IN HERE NOW! THE WHOLE GERMAN FLEET IS BEARING DOWN ON THE FORTRESS. LOOK!
MY GOD...

JARVIS, JIM NEEDS MEDICAL HELP. BOTH OF THEM DO.
AND YOU DON'T?
Warning: Repulsor Power Level: 10%
I CAN PRACTICALLY HEAR THE REPULSOR SPUTTERING OUT FROM HERE. NOW COME ON!
I'M FINE. I'VE GOT AT LEAST EIGHTEEN PERCENT LEFT.
I'M GOING AFTER THE TRIDENT. AND STRUCKER.
ANTHONY, YOU'LL DIE...
WAIT! PLEASE!
CLANK
Warning: Repulsor Power Level: 09%



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Warning: Repulsor Power Level: 07%
Warning: Repulsor Power Level: 06%
Warning: Repulsor Power Level: 05%
THAT ALL...YOU GOT? I THOUGHT YOU KRAUTS WERE SUPPOSED TO BE TOUGH.
TELL HIM, ZEMO.
WHAT WE LACK IN STRENGTH...

...WE MAKE UP FOR IN CUNNING, DEAR ENEMY.
NO...
Warning: Repulsor Power Level: 04%
Warning: Repulsor Power Level: 03%
Warning: Repulsor Power Level: 02%
AND SO WE COME TO THE END OF YOUR LITTLE ADVENTURE, MR. STARK. IT'S IRONIC, WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT...

YOU FELL INTO THE VERY SAME TRAP YOUR FATHER DID SO LONG AGO. AFTER ALL, HE WAS A RICH MAN, BRILLIANT. HE COULD HAVE EASILY AVOIDED THE WAR, LIVED FOR HIMSELF, AS HE SHOULD HAVE.
BUT HE HAD TO TRY TO SAVE THE WORLD. WHICH IS WHAT LANDED HIM IN OUR LABORATORIES. AND NOW HERE YOU ARE.
ALL YOU HAD TO DO WAS FLY AWAY IN YOUR BLIMP, STARK. FLY AWAY AND HAVE YOUR LITTLE ADVENTURES AS YOU'VE BEEN DOING SO WELL. LEAVING US TO OUR RIGHTFUL PLACE.
DON'T WORRY, THOUGH...WE'RE NOT GOING TO KILL YOU. NO, I THINK INSTEAD MAYBE WE'LL MAKE YOU OUR NEXT ZEMO. YOUR FATHER HAS OUTLIVED HIS RESOURCEFULNESS ANYHOW.
AND MY SUSPICION IS THAT IF WE USE A COIL OF ORICHALCUM ON THAT HEART OF YOURS WE MIGHT KEEP YOU ALIVE FOR A HUNDRED YEARS--ZEMO FOREVER.
NEVER.
MY BOY, WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO? KILL US ALL? KILL YOURSELF? YOUR OWN FATHER?
MY FATHER DIED A LONG TIME AGO. AND HE DIED...
NOOO! THE TRIDENT!
...A HERO!

Warning: Repulsor Power Level: 0%
Warning: Repulsor Pow...
Warning: Re--
"GET HIM INSIDE, NOW."
HE STILL OWES ME A DAMN BOAT.

ONE WEEK LATER...
SO THAT'S IT? THAT'S THE END, OFFICIALLY?
STARK M HOSPITAL
ON THE RECORD-- YOU'RE RETIRING AS THE HERO OF TONY STARK ADVENTURES.
BOYS, BOYS. IF THIS LAST ADVENTURE HAS TAUGHT ME ANYTHING, IT'S THAT THERE ARE MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO ATTEND TO IN THE WORLD RIGHT NOW THAN LOOKING FOR MAGICAL TRINKETS.
TIMES ARE HARD AT HOME, AND DANGEROUS ABROAD. AND I THINK THAT MAYBE--
YOU'RE NOT GETTING POLITICAL ON US NOW, ARE YOU, TONY?
SAY IT AIN'T SO! TONY STARK A BLEEDING HEART?
ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT. LET THE MAN REST HIS BONES.

SIGH WRITERS-- VULTURES ONE AND ALL.
YOU SAID IT, NOT ME.
SO YOU WERE SAYING... ABOUT BECOMING A "BLEEDING HEART"?
ON THE RECORD?
ALWAYS.
WELL MAYBE I AM GETTING SOFT. I DON'T KNOW...
RIGHT NOW, MAYBE WE NEED SOME MEN-- GOOD MEN-- WHO ENGAGE THE WORLD, NOT JUST ESCAPE IT.
NICELY PUT, SIR.

NOW IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME FOR A MINUTE, FRIENDS, I HAVE A CALL TO MAKE.
SOME GENERAL--NAME OF FURRY, OR FLURRY--PHONED ABOUT SOME LUNATIC CARRYING ON IN LATVERIA. SO I SUPPOSE OUR LITTLE CONVERSATION ABOUT HEROES...
"...WILL JUST HAVE TO BE CONTINUED..."
MARVELS
A MAGAZINE OF MEN ADVENTURES
THE NEW ADVENTURES OF TONY STARK...
BY PEPPER POTTS
THE END?

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HULK
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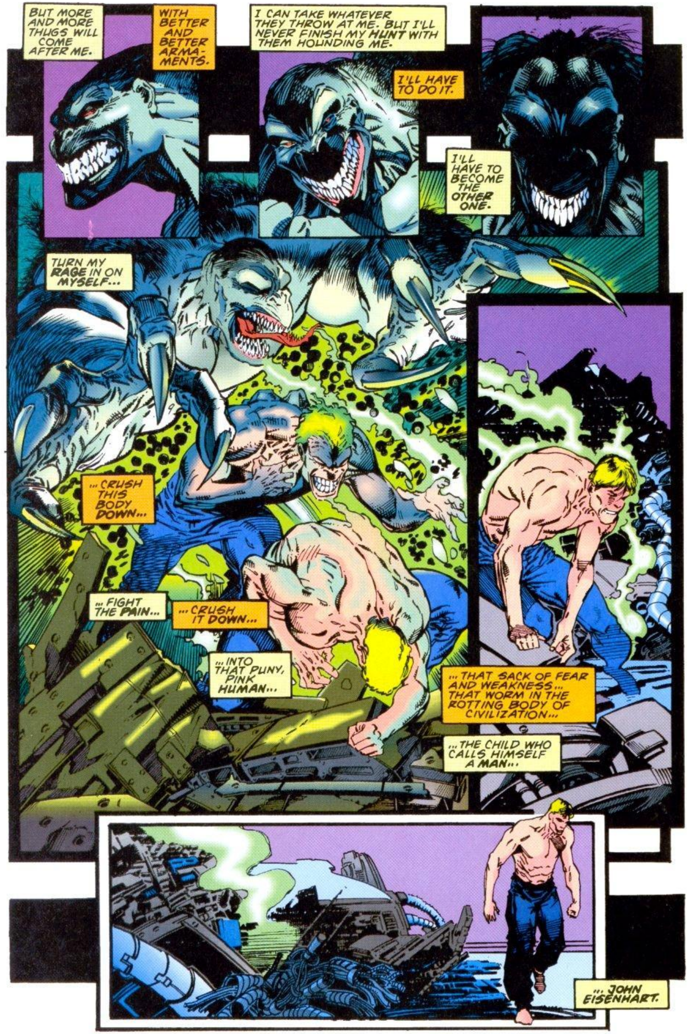
THREE HUNDRED MILES OF NAKED SAND AND ROCK AND ALKALI FLAT. DAYS OF FIRE WITH NO SHADE. NIGHTS LIKE THE DARK SIDE OF THE MOON. THEY SAY NO MAN ON FOOT CAN BEAT THE MOJAVE DESERT.
BUT THE MOJAVE NEVER BEAT ME.
THREE HUNDRED MILES IS HOW FAR I'VE WALKED. I'D WALK ANOTHER THOUSAND IF I HAD TO...
...TO FINISH THIS HUNT.
STAN LEE PRESENTS
HULK 2099
GERARD JONES WRITER
DWAYNE TURNER ARTIST
TOM SMITH COLORIST
STARKINGS LETTERER
JOEY CAVALIERI EDITOR
TOM DeFALCO EDITOR IN CHIEF

I KNOW I'M CLOSE WHEN I CAN SMELL THE WIND. EVEN I FEEL THE CHILL -- IT'S A DANGEROUS SMELL.
I KNOW WHAT POWER I HAVE, BUT WHAT I'M GOING UP AGAINST IS ALMOST BEYOND POWER.
IT DOESN'T WIN ITS BATTLES BY FIGHTING.
IT WINS THEM BY CORRUPTING. BY POISONING. BY STRANGLING.
CIVILIZATION.

AWOOP! AWOOP! AWOOP!
SPOTTED.
OH LORD... OH, LORD...
I COULD KILL HER BEFORE SHE GETS TO THAT BUTTON.
SWEET DREAMS SECURITY SERVICES
BUT THAT ISN'T MY WAY.
THAT'S HER, Huh? CUTE KID. TOO BAD WE HAVE TO WASTE HER.
...SUBLIMINALS POISON YOUR MUSIC AND SOUL...
SWEET DREAMS
TOO BAD SHE COULDN'T KEEP HER MOUTH SHUT.

INTRUDER AT FIVE-THREE-FIVE-FIVE OLYMPIC, PASADENA! APPEARANCE: "DANGEROUS."
SWEET DREAMS--
SCRAMBLE!
FSSHHH
GETTING A FIX ON TARGET.
TARGET RUNNING.
AND FAST!
Oh GEEZ... WHAT IS THAT THING?
ALREADY...
CIVILIZATION'S THUGS!

KROOM
BWOOOM
SEND BACK-UP!
TRACK THIS TH--
MY HEART THUNDERS.
I FEEL MY BLOOD EXPLODE THROUGH MY FLESH.
MY INSTINCTS TEAR THROUGH THIS WORLD THAT'S ALWAYS ENSLAVED ME.
I LIKE IT.


BUT MORE AND MORE THUGS WILL COME AFTER ME.
WITH BETTER AND BETTER ARMA-MENTS.
I CAN TAKE WHATEVER THEY THROW AT ME. BUT I'LL NEVER FINISH MY HUNT WITH THEM HOUNDING ME.
I'LL HAVE TO DO IT.
I'LL HAVE TO BECOME THE OTHER ONE.
TURN MY RAGE IN ON MYSELF...
...CRUSH THIS BODY DOWN...
...FIGHT THE PAIN...
...CRUSH IT DOWN...
...INTO THAT PUNY, PINK HUMAN...
...THAT SACK OF FEAR AND WEAKNESS... THAT WORM IN THE ROTTING BODY OF CIVILIZATION...
...THE CHILD WHO CALLS HIMSELF A MAN...
...JOHN EISENHART.

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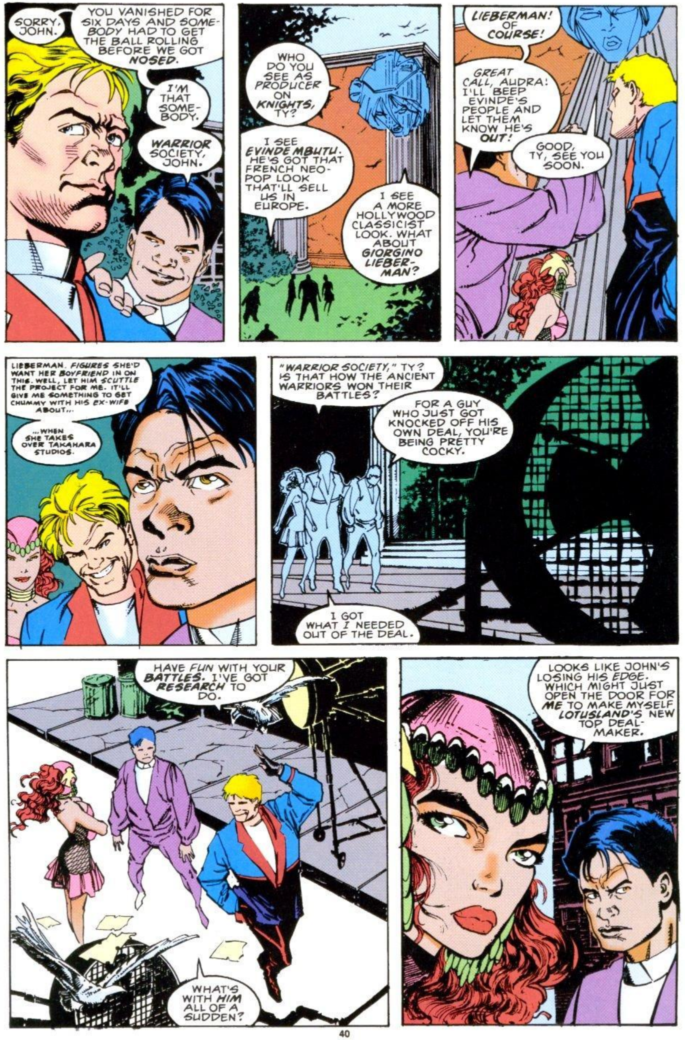
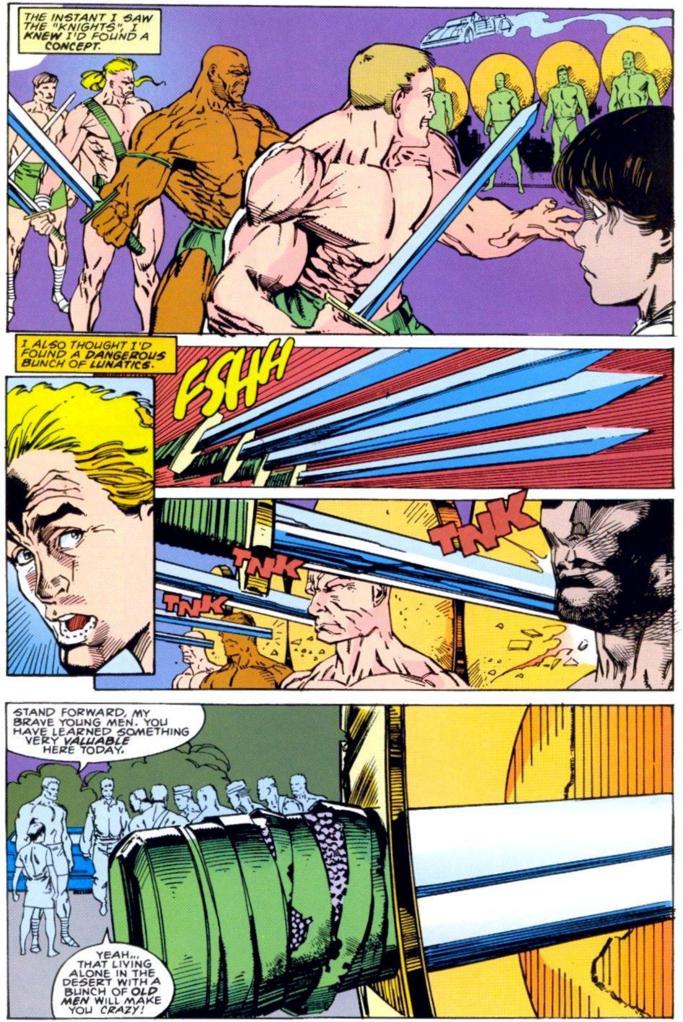
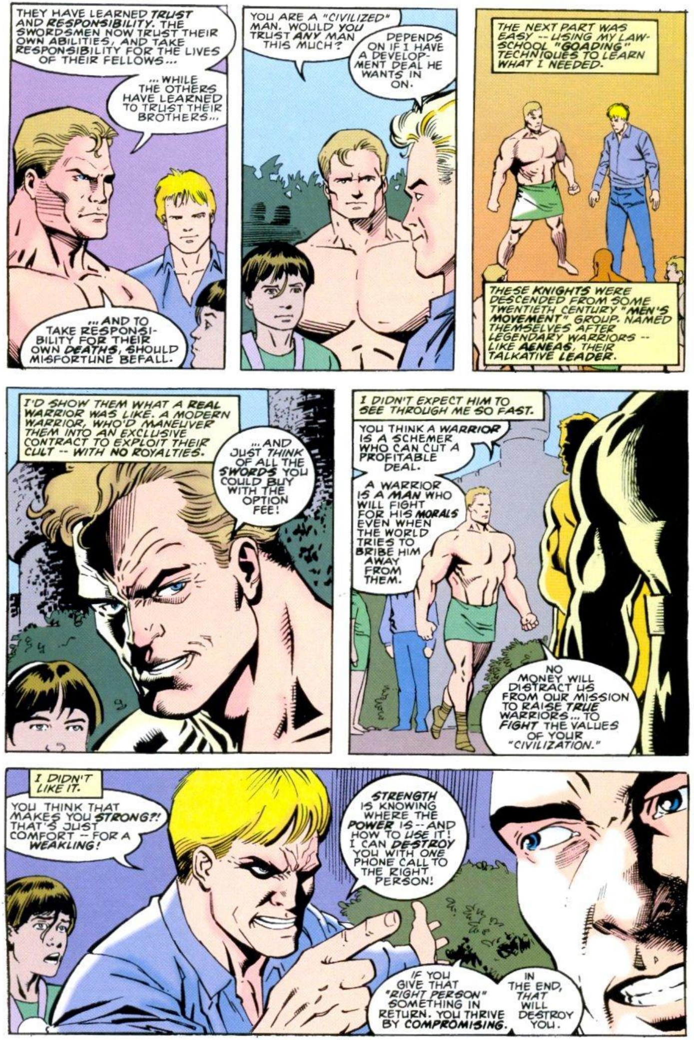
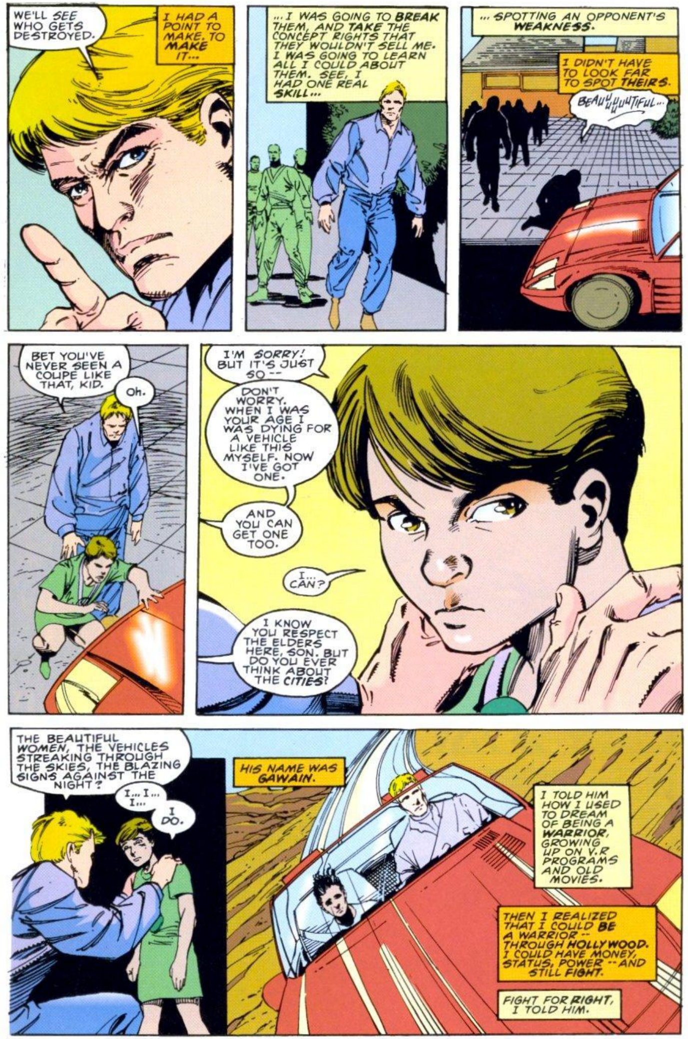


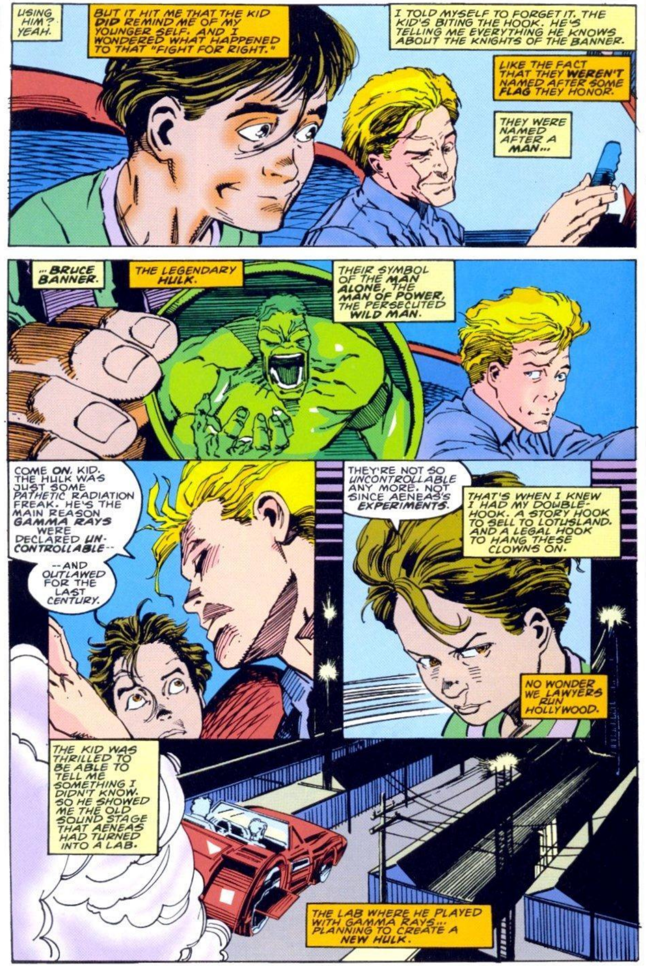
THREE HUNDRED MILES OF WALKING FELT TRUE. THIS FEELS LIKE A LIE.
BUT IT'S HOW I HAVE TO PURSUE THE HUNT NOW. QUIETLY. THROUGH ELECTRONICS.
TRACKING THE NAMES OF ALL THE PLAYERS IN THE KNIGHTS OF THE BANNER "DEAL."
AND THIS IS THE KIND OF ASSAULT I HAVE TO ENDURE. THE STUDIO'S "MENTAL ADJUSTMENT" SPECIALIST.
HELLO, JOHN. A CONCERNED FELLOW EMPLOYEE SAID YOU MIGHT BE SUFFERING SOME POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS AFTER YOUR TROUBLE IN THE DESERT.
WE SHOULD TALK ABOUT IT.
I DON'T NEED TO TALK ABOUT ANYTHING, DOCTOR PHIL.
THAT COULD BE A SIGN OF DENIAL, JOHN.
YOU KNOW THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY DOESN'T LIKE TO SEE A DENIAL DIAGNOSIS ON A RESUME.
MAKE AN APPOINTMENT, JOHN. LET'S TALK.
TALK. ABOUT HOW TO PLAY THE BACKSTABBING GAME -- WITHOUT EVER REVEALING THE LIES OF CORPORATE ENTERTAINMENT.
ABOUT HOW TO THRILL THE ADDICTED PUBLIC WITH OUR VIRTUAL REALITY SOFTWARE -- WITHOUT EVER QUESTIONING THE SYSTEM.
IT'S THE ONLY GAME CIVILIZATION'S "WARRIORS" CAN PLAY. THE GAME I PLAYED...
... BEFORE. WHEN ALL I WANTED TO BE WAS THE BEST OF THE "WARRIORS."
I WAS A CONCEPT-HUNTER ON THE MAKE. SO I WENT SCOUTING WHERE SO MANY SELLABLE IDEAS HAD COME FROM LATELY...
... THE "FRINGIE" CULTS THAT ARE ALLOWED TO LIVE UNPOLICED IN THE GREAT CALIFORNIA WASTELANDS.
AUDRA! THESE "KNIGHTS OF THE BANNER" I'VE TRACKED DOWN SOUND LIKE THEY'VE GOT THE MAKINGS OF A NEW CULT OF THOR!
WE MAY EVEN BE ABLE TO MARKET THEM AS A NEW RELIGION, LIKE NIRVANA MULTIMEDIA SOLD THE THORIES!
AND GET WHERE THEY LIVE --
-- LONE MOUNTAIN!
IT WAS A STUDIO LOT FOR THE LAST BOOM IN "HEROIC ADVENTURE" MOVIES DECADES AGO -- BEFORE VIRTUAL REALITY WIPED OUT LIVE FILMING...
... AND CORPORATE SOCIETY DECIDED THE "LONE HERO" ARCHETYPE WAS A DANGEROUS ROLE MODEL.



THE INSTANT I SAW THE "KNIGHTS", I KNEW I'D FOUND A CONCEPT.
I ALSO THOUGHT I'D FOUND A DANGEROUS BUNCH OF LUNATICS.
FSHH
TNK
TNK
TNK
STAND FORWARD, MY BRAVE YOUNG MEN. YOU HAVE LEARNED SOMETHING VERY VALUABLE HERE TODAY.
YEAH... THAT LIVING ALONE IN THE DESERT WITH A BUNCH OF OLD MEN WILL MAKE YOU CRAZY!


THEY HAVE LEARNED TRUST AND RESPONSIBILITY. THE SWORDSMEN NOW TRUST THEIR OWN ABILITIES, AND TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE LIVES OF THEIR FELLOWS...
...WHILE THE OTHERS HAVE LEARNED TO TRUST THEIR BROTHERS...
...AND TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR OWN DEATHS, SHOULD MISFORTUNE BEFALL.
YOU ARE A "CIVILIZED" MAN. WOULD YOU TRUST ANY MAN THIS MUCH?
DEPENDS ON IF I HAVE A DEVELOPMENT DEAL HE WANTS IN ON.
THE NEXT PART WAS EASY -- USING MY LAW-SCHOOL "GOADING" TECHNIQUES TO LEARN WHAT I NEEDED.
THESE KNIGHTS WERE DESCENDED FROM SOME TWENTIETH CENTURY "MEN'S MOVEMENT" GROUP. NAMED THEMSELVES AFTER LEGENDARY WARRIORS -- LIKE AENEAS, THEIR TALKATIVE LEADER.
I'D SHOW THEM WHAT A REAL WARRIOR WAS LIKE. A MODERN WARRIOR, WHO'D MANEUVER THEM INTO AN EXCLUSIVE CONTRACT TO EXPLOIT THEIR CULT -- WITH NO ROYALTIES.
...AND JUST THINK OF ALL THE SWORDS YOU COULD BUY WITH THE OPTION FEE!
I DIDN'T EXPECT HIM TO SEE THROUGH ME SO FAST.
YOU THINK A WARRIOR IS A SCHEMER WHO CAN CUT A PROFITABLE DEAL.
A WARRIOR IS A MAN WHO WILL FIGHT FOR HIS MORALS EVEN WHEN THE WORLD TRIES TO BRIBE HIM AWAY FROM THEM.
NO MONEY WILL DISTRACT US FROM OUR MISSION TO RAISE TRUE WARRIORS... TO FIGHT THE VALUES OF YOUR "CIVILIZATION."
I DIDN'T LIKE IT.
YOU THINK THAT MAKES YOU STRONG?! THAT'S JUST COMFORT -- FOR A WEAKLING!
STRENGTH IS KNOWING WHERE THE POWER IS -- AND HOW TO USE IT! I CAN DESTROY YOU WITH ONE PHONE CALL TO THE RIGHT PERSON!
IF YOU GIVE THAT "RIGHT PERSON" SOMETHING IN RETURN. YOU THRIVE BY COMPROMISING.
IN THE END, THAT WILL DESTROY YOU.


WE'LL SEE WHO GETS DESTROYED.
I HAD A POINT TO MAKE. TO MAKE IT...
...I WAS GOING TO BREAK THEM, AND TAKE THE CONCEPT RIGHTS THAT THEY WOULDN'T SELL ME. I WAS GOING TO LEARN ALL I COULD ABOUT THEM. SEE, I HAD ONE REAL SKILL...
...SPOTTING AN OPPONENT'S WEAKNESS.
I DIDN'T HAVE TO LOOK FAR TO SPOT THEIRS.
BEAUUUUTIFUL...
BET YOU'VE NEVER SEEN A COUPE LIKE THAT, KID.
Oh.
I'M SORRY! BUT IT'S JUST SO --
DON'T WORRY. WHEN I WAS YOUR AGE I WAS DYING FOR A VEHICLE LIKE THIS MYSELF. NOW I'VE GOT ONE.
AND YOU CAN GET ONE TOO.
I... CAN?
I KNOW YOU RESPECT THE ELDERS HERE, SON. BUT DO YOU EVER THINK ABOUT THE CITIES?
THE BEAUTIFUL WOMEN, THE VEHICLES STREAKING THROUGH THE SKIES, THE BLAZING SIGNS AGAINST THE NIGHT?
I... I... I...
I DO.
HIS NAME WAS GAWAIN.
I TOLD HIM HOW I USED TO DREAM OF BEING A WARRIOR, GROWING UP ON V.R PROGRAMS AND OLD MOVIES.
THEN I REALIZED THAT I COULD BE A WARRIOR -- THROUGH HOLLYWOOD. I COULD HAVE MONEY, STATUS, POWER -- AND STILL FIGHT.
FIGHT FOR RIGHT, I TOLD HIM.



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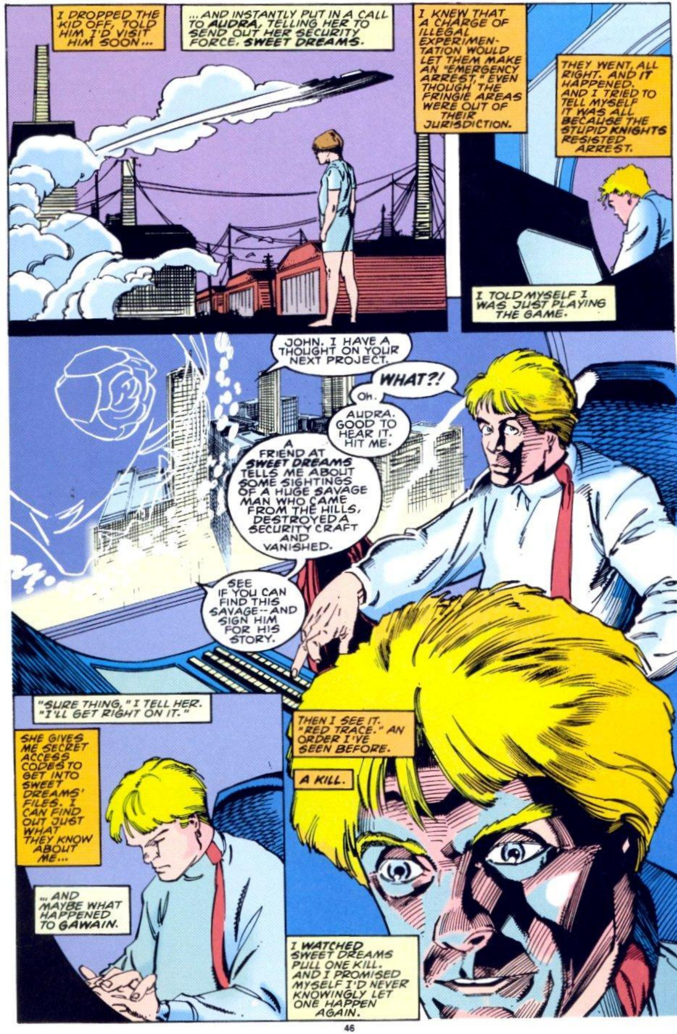


I NOTE THE TARGET. SHE LIVES IN ONE OF THE "MIDDLE AREAS," THE SQUEEZED-DOWN POCKETS OF THE CITY WHERE THINGS STILL FUNCTION...
...BUT NOBODY CAN AFFORD THE BIG SECURITY. HER NAME'S NAOMI SOON-LI TORRIJOS-WASHINGTON.
A SINGER WHO CALLS HERSELF QUIRK.
I HATE 2099!
I WANT IT TO BE LIKE THE 1990'S AGAIN!
BACK WHEN THEY STILL HAD WEIRD STUFF LIKE MOVIE THEATERS--
--AND PUBLIC EDUCATION AND NOT EVERYTHING WAS SO CONTROLLED AND THEY HAD ALL THOSE GREAT CONFLICTS!
LIKE ETHNIC CONFLICTS: LOOK AT ME -- TYPICAL CALIFORNIA GIRL, RIGHT? PART JAPANESE, PART JEWISH, PART CHINESE, PART MEXICAN, PART AFRO-AMERICAN.
I MEAN, I LIKE IT THIS WAY! I DON'T WANT TO BE SOME KIND OF PURIE.
BUT BACK THEN, IT MUST HAVE BEEN SO WILD!
CAN YOU IMAGINE GOING TO A PARTY WITH DAN QUAYLE AND MADONNA AND ICE-T?!
I COULD'VE BEEN AN UPTIGHT WASP SINGING ABOUT HOW AMERICA'S GOING TO THE DOGS... OR AN ANGRY BLACK SINGING ABOUT BRUTAL COPS!
WHAT CAN I SING ABOUT NOW? JUST THE MUSIC BUSINESS ITSELF!

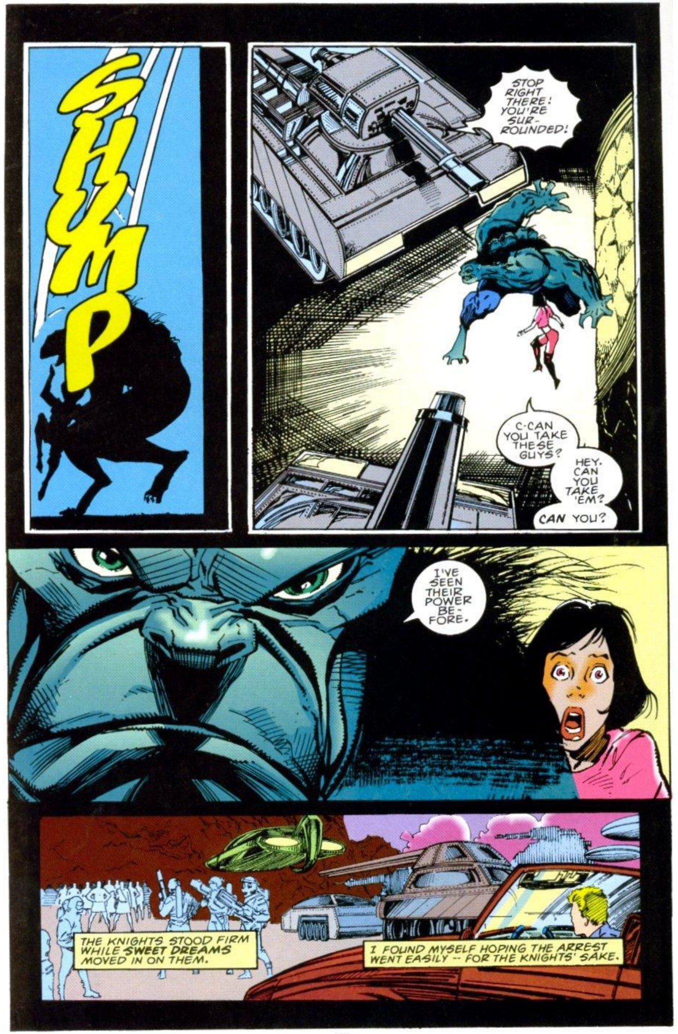
I STILL SAY YOU SHOULD'VE STAYED AWAY FROM THAT, QUIRK.
I BELIEVE YOU, ANITA
DON'T BELIEVE THE HYPE
SOMEBODY'S GOTTA SAY IT, ABDUL! EVERYBODY THINKS STUFF MUSIC IS THE ONLY KIND THAT TELLS THE TRUTH, THAT GOES AGAINST THE CORPORATE MESSAGE--
--AND THEN YOU TELL ME THE PRODUCERS ARE SLIPPING SUBLIMINALS INTO STUFF SONGS!
HEY, IT'S BUSINESS. I RECORDED "PUSH BACK" BECAUSE I WANTED TO SUCCEED IN THIS TOWN.
IF THEY WANT TO SLIDE IN SUBLIMINALS SAYING: "THIS IS JUST A SONG, DON'T TAKE IT SERIOUSLY, YOU'RE HAPPIER AS YOU ARE..."
...THAT'S HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED.
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU. I RESPECTED YOU WHEN WE STARTED DATING! "ABDUL T'CHAKA ROSENTHAL, THE SINGING POET OF TRUTH!"
NOW I'M THE ONLY ONE TELLING THE TRUTH -- I'M THE ONE WITH THE SONG ABOUT SUBLIMINALS!
I TELL YOU, YOU'RE GOING TO GET TROUBLE, PRESSING THAT SONG ON YOUR OWN!
I'VE GOT NOTHING TO LOSE. WHAT CAN THEY DO TO ME?
THEY COULD--
CHOOM

NO!
VROOOSH
SWEET DREAMS.
CHOOM CHOOM
HEY! I DIDN'T DO NOTHING TO YOU!
I'M JUST TRYING TO TELL THE --

CHOOM CHOOM
OH JEEZ
OH JEEZ
GOTTA GET--
NO, GIRL.
NOWHERE TO GET.
NOW JUST LET US GET THIS OVER W --
WHUNCH
HUH ?

BAROOOM
GET--
--OUT!
CHOOM CHOOM CHOOM
YAARRGH

BUH LAMM
I SAID "GET OUT!"
HYAAA!
THIS WAY.
WHA-- WHA--
HEY--! DON'T WRECK MY STUFF!
THERE'LL BE MORE OF THOSE GUYS -- AND THEY WON'T HESITATE TO TORCH A NEIGHBORHOOD. NOT ONE OF THESE NEIGHBORHOODS --
--WHERE NOBODY'S PAYING "SECURITY FEES." YOU'RE GETTING OUT OF HERE -- FOR EVERYBODY'S SAKE.
HEY.
WHAT ARE YOU?!


SHUMP
STOP RIGHT THERE! YOU'RE SUR-ROUNDED!
C-CAN YOU TAKE THESE GUYS?
HEY. CAN YOU TAKE 'EM?
CAN YOU?
I'VE SEEN THEIR POWER BE-FORE.
THE KNIGHTS STOOD FIRM WHILE SWEET DREAMS MOVED IN ON THEM.
I FOUND MYSELF HOPING THE ARREST WENT EASILY -- FOR THE KNIGHTS' SAKE.

WHAT WE DO HERE IS RIGHT.
WE WILL NOT TOSS OURSELVES INTO YOUR CORRUPT AND TANGLED JUDICIAL SYSTEM TO ATTEMPT TO PROVE IT TO YOU.
WE ARE WARRIORS. WE ARE MEN. WE WILL FIGHT FOR OUR BELIEFS.
AND, IF WE MUST, WE WILL DIE FOR THOSE BELIEFS -- LIKE MEN.
YOU'LL DIE, ALL RIGHT --
-- LIKE IDIOTS!
CHOOM
AENEAS!
AENEAS!
NO!
SUDDENLY, I WAS PUNCHING THE ACCELERATOR, SLICING IN BETWEEN SO THEY COULDN'T FIRE.
INSTEAD, THEY JUST FIRED ON ME.

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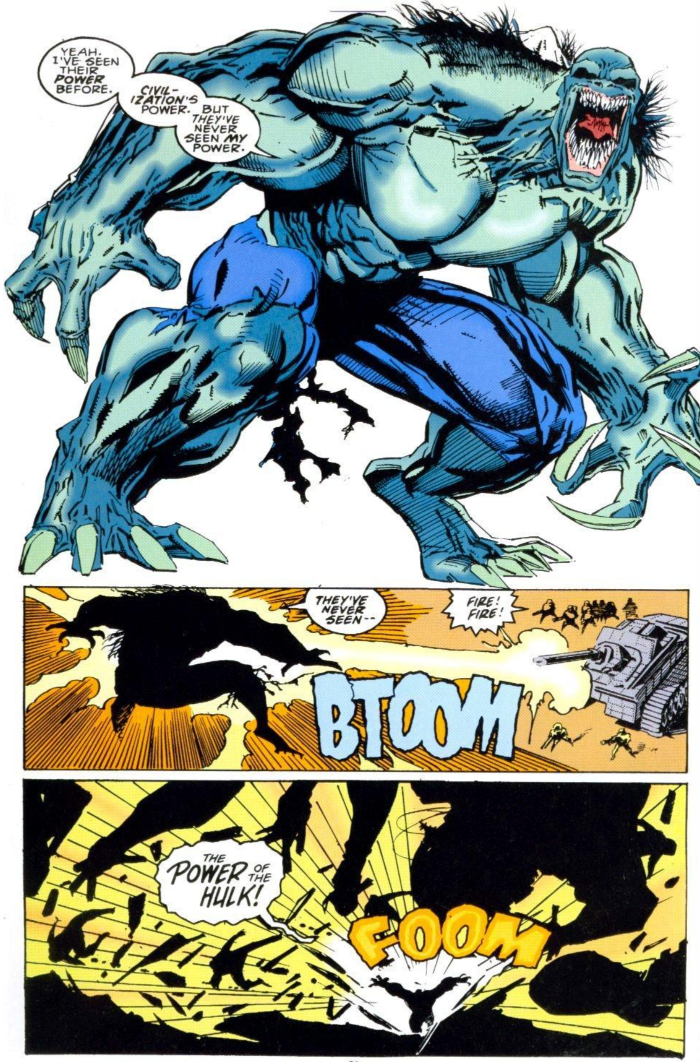
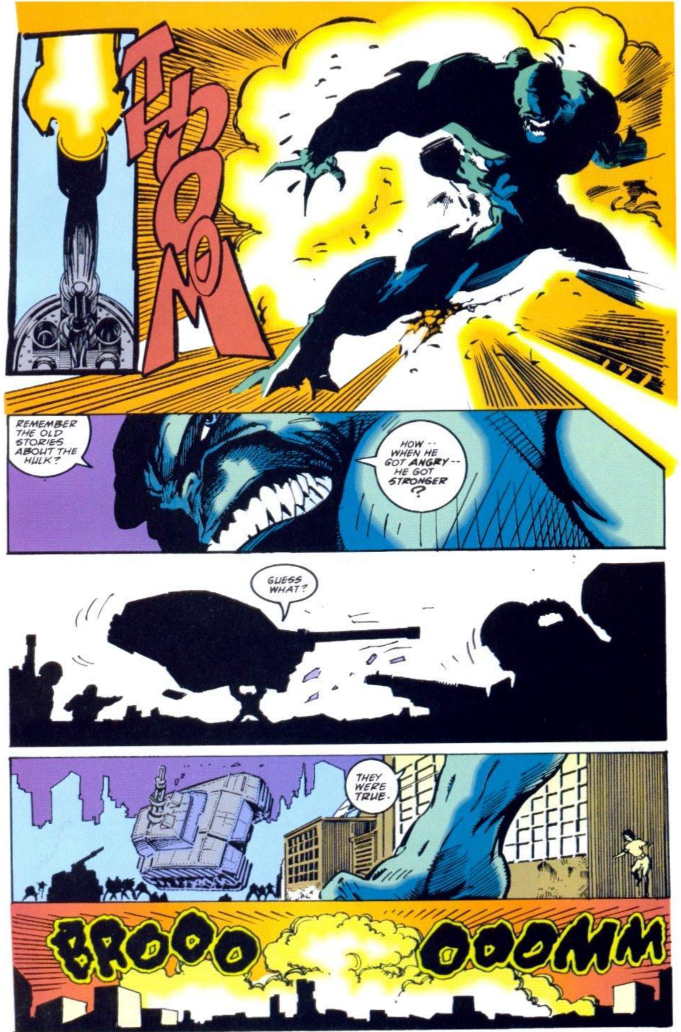
BOOOOM
AAAAAA
I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG I LAY THERE.
WHEN I CRAWLED TO THE STREET, SWEET DREAMS WAS GONE, THE KNIGHTS WERE GONE... GAWAIN WAS GONE.
LATER I LEARNED THAT GAWAIN WAS THE ONLY KNIGHT WHO DIDN'T SHOW UP ON THE LIST OF THE DEAD.
LATER, I WOULD BEGIN MY HUNT.
I WOULD TRY TO TRACK GAWAIN AND HIS CAPTORS.
BUT NOT THEN.
THEN I ONLY KNEW WHAT I'D DONE.
I ONLY KNEW WHAT CIVILIZATION HAD MADE ME.
AND IT MADE ME ANGRY.
IT MADE ME VERY ANGRY.
IT MADE ME WHAT THE KNIGHTS HAD TRIED TO CREATE.



YEAH. I'VE SEEN THEIR POWER BEFORE.
CIVIL-IZATION'S POWER.
BUT THEY'VE NEVER SEEN MY POWER.
THEY'VE NEVER SEEN--
FIRE! FIRE!
BTOOM
THE POWER OF THE HULK!
FOOM

GYAARH!
SHRRAKK
NNH!
SHOCK TROOPS--
SHUMP
CHOK
--HIT!!
YOUR GADGETS.. ARE GETTING BETTER... ALL THE TIME.
LET'S HEAR IT--
WTAM
--FOR TECHNOLOGY!

CH
CH
CH
CHOOM
OKAY-- LET'S END THIS!
CH
CH
CHOOM
FORGET REGULATIONS--
--LET'S JUST END THIS!
YEAH
LET'S!
FIRE ARTILLERY!



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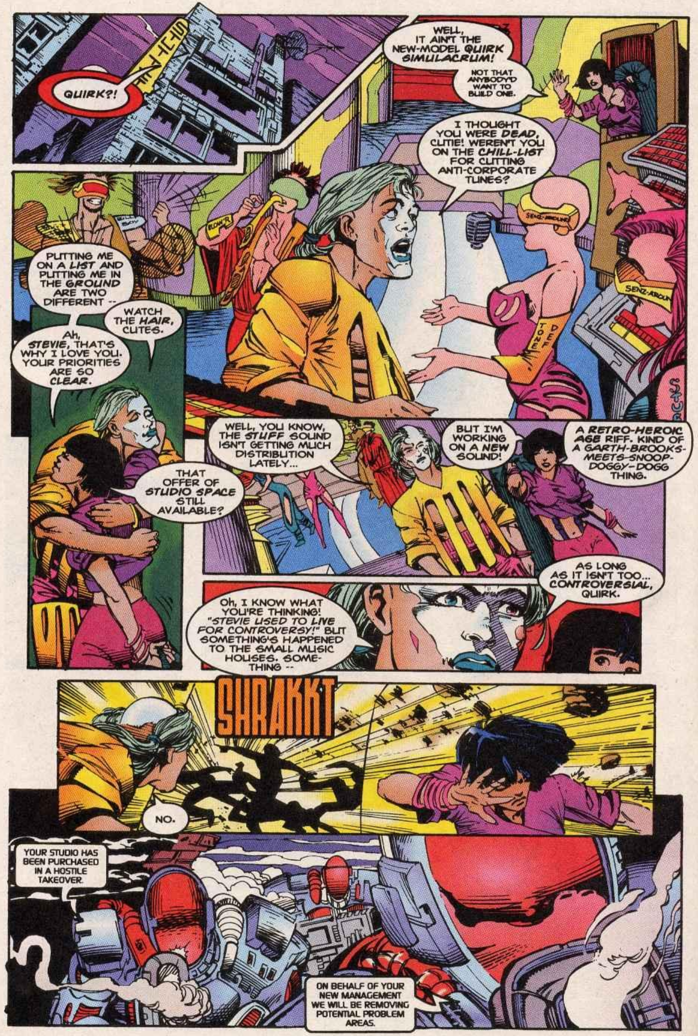
YOU THINK YOU LOSERS CAN BEAT HOLLY-WOOD?
THE KNIGHTS OF THE BANNER WOULD RATHER DIE THAN SELL OUR SECRETS TO YOUR CORRUPTION!
LOTUSLAND ENTERTAINMENT. WHERE MY WORMY PINK SELF MADE HIS DIRTY FORTUNE IN VIRTUAL REALITY PROGRAMMING.
RIGHT ABOUT NOW THEY SHOULD BE SHOOTING A LIE-FILLED VERSION OF THE STORY OF MY LAST -- AND UGLIEST -- DEAL.
CINESCENE VR3
MOTION
EDIT
WHERE IS JOHN, ANYWAY? HE GOT THIS "KNIGHTS" PROPERTY FOR US, YOU'D THINK HE'D BE HERE.
SURPRISED, TY? YOU KNOW HOW WEIRD JOHN'S BEEN ACTING EVER SINCE HE GOT THE KNIGHTS SLAUGHTERED.
YOU COUNT JOHN'S MISTAKES A LOT MORE CAREFULLY THAN I DO, KEISHA. YOU'RE THE ONE IN LINE TO TAKE OVER HIS JOB.
YOU MUST BE JUST DROOLING OVER THESE RUMORS OF A NEW OWNER BUYING THE STUDIO.
OH, TY! YOU CAN'T THINK I'D PLOT AGAINST MY DEAR FRIEND JOHN TO ADVANCE MY OWN --
ALL LOTUSLAND PERSONNEL!
ALL PRODUCTION WILL STOP IMMEDIATELY!
WE ARE FACING AN --
AIIYAAAGH
AUDRA --?!
HEY! OUR REALITY'S BEEN CUT OFF!
WHAT HAPPENED TO HER? WHAT'S GOING ON?
I'M NOT SURE! BUT I THINK WE'D BETTER BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR NEW BUTTS TO KISS RIGHT NOW!

ME, I DON'T CARE WHAT THEY'RE DOING AT LOTUS-LAND. THIS IS MY LAST TRIP THERE.
I'M GONNA CASH OUT MY CONTRACT, SET THE KID UP WITH SOME HEALTH-CULTISTS IN THE DESERT WHO'LL KEEP HIM SAFE...AND GO.
I DIDN'T WANT TO BRING THE KID. HE'S THE LAST OF THE KNIGHTS OF THE BANNER. HE'S GOT SOME PURITY LEFT IN HIM.
BRINGING HIM TO A HOLLYWOOD STUDIO IS LIKE DIPPING YOUR ICE CREAM CONE INTO A SEWAGE VAT.
-- BUT I'M NOT GOING TO LEAVE YOU AT MY PLACE TO BE HUNTED DOWN!
QUIRK WAS SUPPOSED TO GUARD YOU, BUT SINCE SHE WALKED OUT ON US --
YOU DROVE HER AWAY!
NOW WHY DON'T YOU JUST LEAVE ME TO DIE, LIKE YOU LEFT MY FAMILY AND FRIENDS?!
GAWAIN... I'M NOT GOING TO DEFEND WHAT I DID! BUT WHAT I DID CHANGED ME. I'M NOT THE JOHN EISENHART WHO BETRAYED YOU.
I SAVED YOUR LIFE AND NURSED YOU BACK TO HEALTH BECAUSE --
BECAUSE YOU WANT ME TO FOR-GIVE YOU! SO YOU CAN STOP FEELING GUILTY!
WELL, I'M NEVER GOING TO DO THAT! NEVER!
GAWAIN...
LOOK OUT!
VOOOOSSH
THIS IS A ONE-WAY ZONE, IDIOT! ARE YOU CRAZY?!

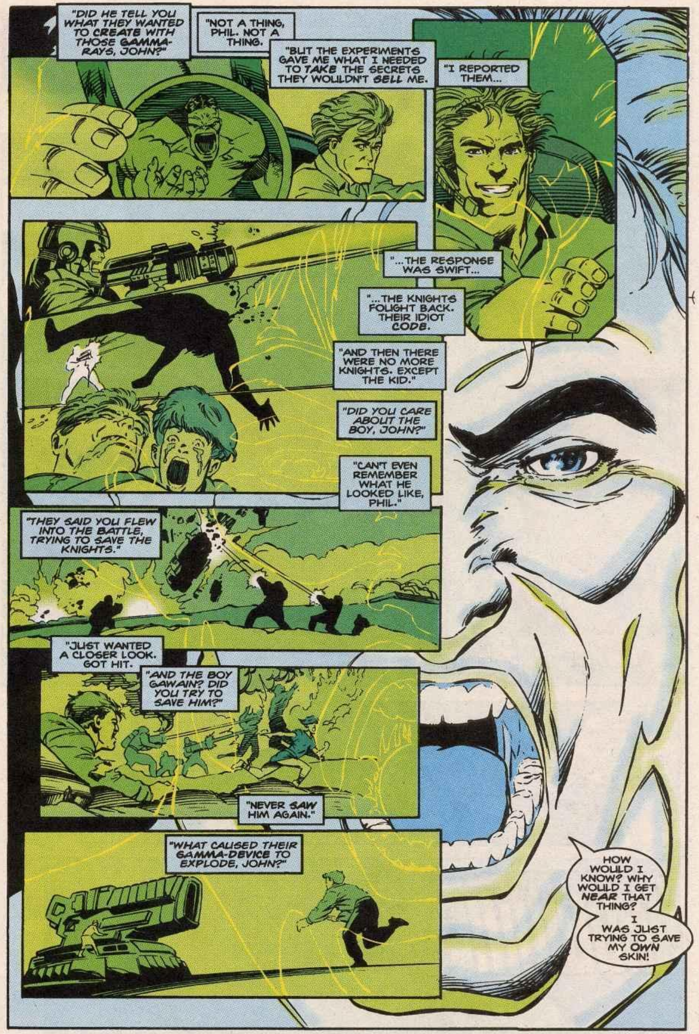
CRAZY.
JUST WHEN I THINK CIVILIZATION'S GONE AS INSANE AS IT CAN, I SEE THIS.
EVERY-BODY'S CLEARING OFF THE LOT!
THERE'S A PANIC GOING ON!
WELL, AT LEAST PARKING WASN'T A PROBLEM, FOR A CHANGE.
STAY HERE -- AND STAY LOW! I'LL BE BACK AS FAST AS I CAN!
I CAN'T WAIT.
GETTING TO MY OFFICE IS LIKE FIGHTING THROUGH A STREAM OF SPAWNING SALMON, ONLY THE CROWD ISN'T QUITE AS CUDDLY.
I DON'T WASTE TIME ASKING WHAT'S GOING ON. I JUST WANT MY BOSS --
AUDRA! IT'S JOHN!
AUDRA...WEISSMAN... WILL NO LONGER BE AVAILABLE THROUGH THIS EXCHANGE.
WHAT HAPPENED TO HER?
CAN THIS INTERACTIVE SYSTEM BE OF SERVICE?
I SAID, WHAT --
FORGET IT! CAN'T ARGUE WITH A MACHINE! I WANT TO CASH OUT MY EMPLOYEE SHARES AND --
DON'T BE IN SUCH A HURRY, JOHN.
ODD YOU SHOULD BE SO EAGER TO LEAVE... RIGHT NOW.
I THINK WE SHOULD TALK.
DR. PHIL. THE STUDIO'S "MOOD MANAGEMENT EXPERT." THEIR BRAIN WASHER.

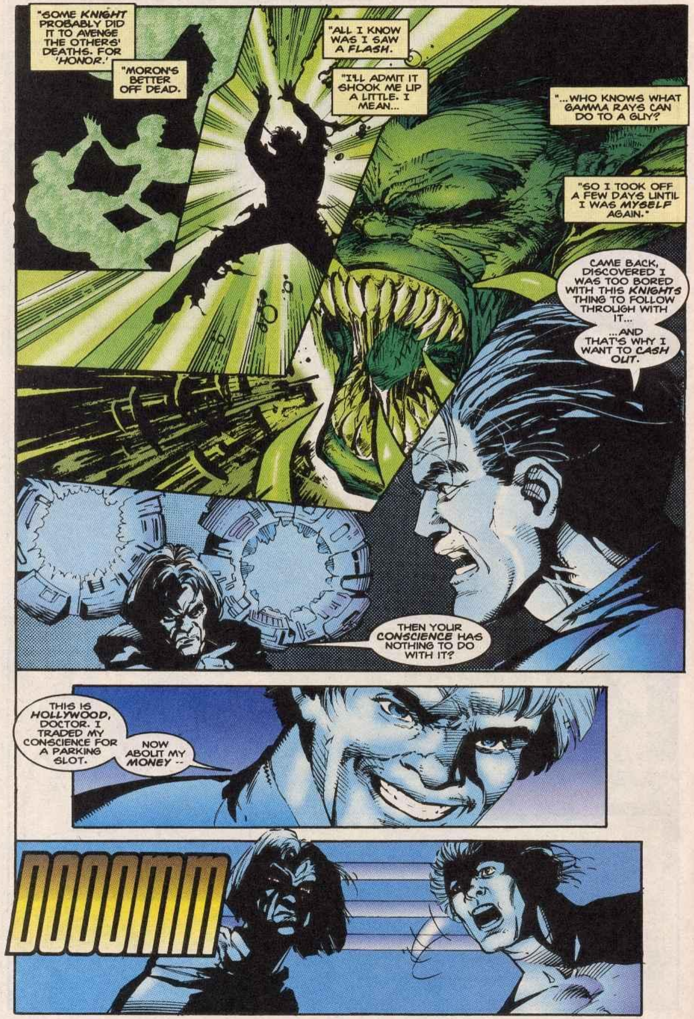
JOHN, YOU SELFISH ARROGANT, HEARTLESS ...DWORP!
I THOUGHT YOU WERE GONNA STICK AROUND TO TAKE CARE OF GAWAIN, AND PROTECT THE HELPLESS... AND BE NEAR ME!
SO WHAT'RE YOU DOING? HEADING FOR THE DESERT TO PLAY NATURE BOY! MAN, I WISH IT WAS THE NINETEEN NINETIES -- WHEN HEROES WERE HEROES!
HEY BIG BABY! WE GOT A CUTE LITTLE SOMETHING COMING UP THAT MAYBE WE SHOULD OUGHTTA INVESTIGATE!
CAREFUL, LI'L SISTER! DON'T YOU KNOW YOU'RE IN AN UNSUPERVISED ZONE? THAT MEANS A BAAAAAD NEIGHBORHOOD IF YOU DON'T BELONG!
LUCKY YOU MET US. WE'RE EYES HERE. YOU KNOW WHAT EYES ARE?
YEAH, GANGSTER THUGS WHO PASS FOR COPS WHERE THERE'S NO MONEY TO PAY FOR THE REAL THING.
NO, HONEY. EYES ARE WHAT YOU GOT THAT MAKE ME CRAAAAZY!
HYUH HYUH HYUH!
NOW WE COULD MAKE LIFE A LOT SAFER FOR YOU, OR A LOT --
POW!
THAT'S WHAT I SHOULDA DONE TO YOU, JOHN!


QUIRK?!
WELL, IT AIN'T THE NEW-MODEL QUIRK SIMULACRUM!
NOT THAT ANYBODY'D WANT TO BUILD ONE.
I THOUGHT YOU WERE DEAD, CUTIE! WEREN'T YOU ON THE CHILL-LIST FOR CUTTING ANTI-CORPORATE TUNES?
PUTTING ME ON A LIST AND PUTTING ME IN THE GROUND ARE TWO DIFFERENT --
WATCH THE HAIR, CUTES.
Ah, STEVIE, THAT'S WHY I LOVE YOU. YOUR PRIORITIES ARE SO CLEAR.
THAT OFFER OF STUDIO SPACE STILL AVAILABLE?
WELL, YOU KNOW, THE STUFF SOUND ISN'T GETTING MUCH DISTRIBUTION LATELY...
BUT I'M WORKING ON A NEW SOUND!
A RETRO-HEROIC AGE RIFF. KIND OF A GARTH-BROOKS-MEETS-SNOOP-DOGGY-DOGG THING.
AS LONG AS IT ISN'T TOO... CONTROVERSIAL, QUIRK.
Oh, I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING! "STEVIE USED TO LIVE FOR CONTROVERSY!" BUT SOMETHING'S HAPPENED TO THE SMALL MUSIC HOUSES. SOME-THING --
SHRAKKT
NO.
YOUR STUDIO HAS BEEN PURCHASED IN A HOSTILE TAKEOVER.
ON BEHALF OF YOUR NEW MANAGEMENT WE WILL BE REMOVING POTENTIAL PROBLEM AREAS.

MATCH
WOMAN MATCHES TARGET TEMPLATE FROM SWEET DREAMS™ SECURITY.
TARGET-LOCK -ON-
WHY DO I GET THE FEELING "PROBLEM AREAS" INCLUDES ME?
QUIRK, LOOK --
FOOMF
STEVIE!!
I'M NOT RUNNING AWAY ANY-MORE, YOU --
FOOMF
WELL, OKAY, MAYBE I AM.
BUT ONLY 'TILL I FIND A WAY TO GET YOU --
MMPF!
VIP
VIP
JOHN! I TAKE IT ALL BACK! I COULD REALLY REALLY USE YOU NOW!
WHERE ARE YOU WHEN I NEED YOU?!
JOHNN!!

WE BELIEVE YOU MAY HAVE ACQUIRED INFORMATION OF VALUE TO LOTUSLAND, JOHN.
AS YOU KNOW, YOUR CONTRACT STATES THAT ALL YOUR THOUGHTS AND MEMORIES WHILE IN OUR EMPLOY BELONG TO US.
MY EQUIPMENT CAN EXTRACT THE INFORMATION IF NECESSARY, BUT IT WOULD BE EASIER IF --
JUST ASK YOUR BLASTED QUESTIONS -- DOCTOR!
IT'S ABOUT THE KNIGHTS OF THE BANNER, ISN'T IT?
I'VE ANSWERED EVERY QUESTION I CAN ABOUT THEM. WHY I DISAPPEARED FOR A WHILE AFTER I GOT THEIR STORY, WHY --
I KNOW, JOHN. BUT THE STUDIO HAS NEW INVESTORS...
...WHO THINK THOSE "KNIGHTS" MIGHT BE CONNECTED TO A SCHEME TO RECREATE THE LEGENDARY HULK OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY.
WHAT DO YOU THINK?
MY JOB HERE WAS TO HUNT DOWN PROPERTIES FOR VIRTUAL REALITY PROGRAMMING. I FOCUSED ON CULTS BECAUSE I LIKED THE CHALLENGE.
I HEARD ABOUT SOME "MEN'S MOVEMENT" RADICALS IN THE DESERT...THE KNIGHTS. THEY LIVED BY THE "WARRIOR'S CODE." YOU KNOW...
"...HONOR, TRUST, DUTY."
"IT WAS PATHETIC."
"WOULDN'T SELL ME THEIR STORIES. VALUED 'HONOR' MORE THAN HOLLYWOOD MONEY."
"LUCKILY THERE WAS ONE I COULD GET TO. A KID NAMED GAWAIN.
"ONE RIDE IN A FAST CAR AND HE WAS TELLING ME ABOUT THE KNIGHTS' ILLEGAL GAMMA-RAY EXPERIMENTS."


"DID HE TELL YOU WHAT THEY WANTED TO CREATE WITH THOSE GAMMA-RAYS, JOHN?"
"NOT A THING, PHIL. NOT A THING.
"BUT THE EXPERIMENTS GAVE ME WHAT I NEEDED TO TAKE THE SECRETS THEY WOULDN'T SELL ME.
"I REPORTED THEM...
"...THE RESPONSE WAS SWIFT...
"...THE KNIGHTS FOUGHT BACK. THEIR IDIOT CODE.
"AND THEN THERE WERE NO MORE KNIGHTS. EXCEPT THE KID."
"DID YOU CARE ABOUT THE BOY, JOHN?"
"CAN'T EVEN REMEMBER WHAT HE LOOKED LIKE, PHIL."
"THEY SAID YOU FLEW INTO THE BATTLE, TRYING TO SAVE THE KNIGHTS."
"JUST WANTED A CLOSER LOOK. GOT HIT.
"AND THE BOY GAWAIN? DID YOU TRY TO SAVE HIM?"
"NEVER SAW HIM AGAIN."
"WHAT CAUSED THEIR GAMMA-DEVICE TO EXPLODE, JOHN?"
HOW WOULD I KNOW? WHY WOULD I GET NEAR THAT THING?
I WAS JUST TRYING TO SAVE MY OWN SKIN!



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HOSTILE TAKEOVER TIME, eh?
LOOKS LIKE YOU MAY HAVE TO START LOOKING FOR A NEW PLACE TO SHRINK HEADS, PHIL.
I'VE ALREADY WORKED OUT A LONG-TERM DEAL WITH THE NEW MANAGEMENT. PITY AUDRA WASN'T SO FLEXIBLE.
THIS ISN'T NEW YORK, DRACO! AND YOU AREN'T ALCHEMAX!
YOU DON'T JUST TAKE OVER A STUDIO BY FORCE IN CALIFORNIA!
I KNOW THE RULES, PROLE. I'VE BEEN STAGING THIS TAKEOVER FOR WEEKS THROUGH FINANCE AND LAW...
BA DOOM
...I ONLY USE FORCE AS A FINISHING TOUCH!
GYAAHH!
THOSE SECURITY DROIDS. THE SAME AS AT THE WATER RECLAMATION ZONE.
WHO TAKES OVER V.R. STUDIOS AND WATER RESOURCES?
DR. PHIL
WHAT'S THIS DRACO DOING?

HI-YEEEEE
WHAT'S HAPPENING?!
OF COURSE YOU WOULDN'T KNOW. THE BUSINESS WORLD HAS NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE ME BEFORE.
WITH THIS TAKEOVER I COMPLETE THE FOUNDATION OF MY DRACONIAN CONGLOMERATE. I HOPE YOU WILL ENJOY PARTICIPATING IN A CORPORATE ADVENTURE...
...THAT WILL CHANGE CALIFORNIA... AND THE COMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY... AND THUS, INEVITABLY...
...THE WORLD.
I CAN SETTLE FOR NO LESS. YOU SEE, IT'S WHAT MY SOFTWARE DEMANDS...
...AND MY HUMAN SELF HAS NO CHOICE BUT TO OBEY.
GOTTA... GOTTA NAIL THIS GUY!
TY! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
I'VE GOT EQUITY IN THIS COMPANY, KEISHA! AND I'M NOT LOSING MY STOCK SHARES FOR THIS PSYCHO!

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COMBAT!
SOMEONE'S BEING ATTACKED! PROBABLY JUST HOLLYWOOD PEOPLE -- BAD PEOPLE --
BUT I'M A KNIGHT OF THE BANNER! AND THE KNIGHTS PLEDGE TO PROTECT OTHERS IN DANGER!
GAWAIN -- GET DOWN!
JOHN...?
HE CAUSED THE DEATHS OF EVERYONE I KNEW --
-- BUT HE'S A LIFE!
AND HE'S IN DANGER!
GAWAIN!
NO!!
SHAKKASHAKKASHAKKA

BOOOM
GOT 'EM.
HEY. MORE TROUBLE.
THEN LET'S TAKE IT TO 'EM!
CHKK
GA... WAIN...?

BULLPEN BULLETINS

Stan's Soapbox

Hi, True Believers!

By now, I imagine there isn't a Marvelite anywhere who hasn't seen television's newest animated cartoon hit, THE MARVEL ACTION HOUR!

It kept us busy all last year, working with the greatest staff of animators we could find. And, y'know something? It was worth it! We never had more fun!

For one thing, it seems that everyone in Hollywood was clamoring to be part of the show. Why? Because it turns out that most of the film community here has grown up with Marvel! I wish you could have been here when we interviewed our staff. Every time we'd start to explain who the characters were and what the stories were about they'd interrupt us. "Hey, we know all about Jim Rhodes! Rhodey is Tony Stark's friend and he's a hero himself named War Machine!" Or, "You don't have to show us how to draw the Fantasticar. We used to make models of it when we were kids!" I tell ya, it was a blast. The guys and gals working on our show know as much about our books as we do! (They probably know even more, but I'm too embarrassed to admit it!)

Speaking of embarrassment, did you notice who's been acting as the host of the MARVEL ACTION HOUR? How could you help but notice — I'm in your face at the start of every segment! You may not know it, but it changed my life forever and, generous soul that I am, I'm willing to share that change with you ...

You see, early on I didn't want to host the show. I begged them to get someone else. I mean, it takes a lot of nerve to face a few million viewers week after week — especially with a face like mine! But, after filming the first few episodes, I decided it was cool. It got to me. I did what almost everyone else in Hollywood does — I became a real ham! (Even more than I had been!) Now, I can't wait till next season to do some more hosting! In fact, I'm trying to figure out how to get hired for the Spider-Man and X-Men shows! So that's my heart-rending confession. I've become addicted to being on screen!

I wonder — do you think Ren and Stimpy can use a host?

Excelsior!

Stan

Stan Lee

Hype Box

NIGHTMARE #1

Welcome to our NIGHTMARE Limited Series! Starting this week the Lord of the Dream Dimension stars in this demented love story that, according to editor **Chris Cooper**, shows "what happens when Nightmare falls in love with a mortal woman, and gives up his throne to become a mortal himself!" A new creature, Exile, takes over the dream dimension, and decides to send some demonic assassins to prevent Nightmare from ever coming back! NIGHTMARE is written by **Ann Nocenti**, penciled by **Joe Bennett**, and inked by **Mike Witherby**. Chris promised that this series will most definitely give you nightmares!

HULK 2099 #1

The "big, ugly guy with the funny tongue" (as writer **Gerry Jones** refers to him) gets his own monthly book when HULK 2099 #1 debuts this week. Gerry said the book will play off the idea of "the wild man in a technological world." In the first issue, Gerry introduces a new arch-enemy for ol' Greenskin: Draco, a cyborg who is part human, part perfect business machine! Gerry said he was "real happy" with the art for HULK 2099, which is provided by **Malcolm Davis** and **Chris Ivey**. No plans for a meeting between the present and future Hulks, but Gerry thinks his guy would win in a fight! Peter? Bobbie?

BISHOP #1

Editor **Suzanne Gaffney** on the BISHOP 4-issue Limited Series: "It's about Bishop ... it's about his sister... it's about the one that got away... it's about time!" The story has the popular X-Man pursuing Mountjoy, the one villain from the future he has yet to catch. Suzanne described BISHOP as "a quality package, through and through. The story by **John Ostrander** is excellent. The art by **Carlos Pacheco** and **Cam Smith** is bodacious! I should also mention the great coloring by **Joe Rosas**, and the amazing lettering of **Richard Starkings**!" So what are you waiting for? Make the move for BISHOP today!

Now On Sale

- **AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #396: Vultures** and **Owls** and **Daredevil** — oh my! By DeMatteis/Bagley/Mahlstedt!
- **BARBIE #48:** A TV talk-show host comes to Skipper's school! It's Oprah-rific! By Slate/Rausch/Tanghal!
- **BISHOP #1 OF 4:** Meet **Mountjoy** — a villain from Bishop's past — and our future! By Ostrander/Pacheco/Smith!
- **BLACKWULF #7:** You'll be tantalized by **Lord Tantalus**! By Herdling/Medina/Anderson!
- **CONAN CLASSIC #7:** Young Conan confronts **Thoth-Amon**! By Thomas/Windsor-Smith/S. Buscema!
- **CONAN SAGA #93: Belit** is back — just in time to face the **Serpent Men**! By Thomas/J.Buscema/Chan!
- **C.S. LEWIS'S SCREWTAPE LETTERS:** 96 pages of demonic tales from the classic book! By . Hall/Redding!
- **GENERATION X DELUXE #2:** Meet **Penance** — and pay the price! By Lobdell/Bachalo/Buckingham!
- **GHOST RIDER #56:** Ghostie is swept up by the **Next Wave**! By Mackie/Larroca/Melia!
- **GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY #55: Ripjack** goes off on a tear! By Gallagher/West/Montano!
- **HULK 2099 #1:** Shockin' great first issue — because he demanded it! Foil cover! By Jones/Davis/Ivy!
- **THE LITTLE MERMAID #4:** Romeo and Juliet — fish-style! By Trusiani/Wilshire/Hunt!
- **MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS #169: Mandarin**! Plus: **It, the Living Colossus**!
- **NIGHTMARE #1of 4:** One of **Dr. Strange**'s greatest foes in his own limited series! By Nocenti/Bennett/Witherby!
- **NIGHT THRASHER #17:** War Machine visits to play the field with Field Force! By Busiek/Nichols!
- **PUNISHER WAR ZONE #34:** The war zone moves east — Frank heads to Russia! By Dixon/Kubert!
- **RAVAGE 2099 #25:** 48 pages! Foil cover! **Hulk 2099** preview! 'Nuff shocked! By Mills & Skinner/Bennett/Adams!
- **SECRET DEFENDERS #22:** The origin of **Shadowoman** — revealed at last! By Brevoort & Kanterovich/Wylie/DeZuniga!
- **SILVER SABLE #31:** Sable heads to Japan to shanghai some terrorists! By Wright/Purcell/Eklund!
- **ULTRA X-MEN COLLECTION #1 OF 5:** Collecting the classic ultra-cards!
- **VERY BEST OF SPIDER-MAN TPB:** The finest threads in Spidey's web!
- **THE VISION #2 OF 4:** It's a re-Vision-ist history of the Vision! By Harras/Clark/Vey!
- **WAR MACHINE #9:** Will **Force Works** rescue Rhodey from the **Mandarin**? By Kaminski & Benson/Gecko/Eklund!
- **WOLVERINE DELUXE #88:** Wolvie's healing powers return! No more shaving cuts! By Hama/Kubert/Farmer!
- **X-FACTOR DELUXE #109: Legion** is back — to destroy all mutants! By Moore & Dezago/Duursema/Milgrom!
- **X-MEN ADVENTURES SEASON II #11: Longshot** guest-stars in **Mojo**'s TV terror! By Macchio/Hebert/ Adams!
- **X-MEN: THE EARLY YEARS #8:** Can't touch this! It's **Unus the Untouchable**! By Lee/Kirby/Stone!

NEWSBITES: ON SALE NEXT WEEK: ... TWO NEW MEMBERS OF CLAN DESTINE SHOW UP ... QUICKSILVER AND THE SCARLET WITCH IN PATERNAL INTRIGUE ... KITTY VERSUS NIGHTCRAWLER ... A NEW MARVEL BOY PREMIERES IN THE PAGES OF JUSTICE ... *MORBIUS* WANTS THE WEREWOLF TO ASSIST HIM IN SUICIDE ... TYRANNUS TALES OVER MONSTER ISLAND ... VENOM IS SEPARATED FROM THE SYMBIOTE ... NOVA GOES TO THE MOON ... *GIANT MAN* MEETS BLACK GOLIATH FOR THE LAST TIME ... WHAT IF CAP HAD BEEN REVIVED IN THE '90s? ... GET MAXED ON MARVEL!

LARGE IMPACT AREA.
GROUP FORMATION. IN UNISON --
THOOM
-- ATT AaFxL*
FZZZTZZ
B-LANG
DRA...CO...
GREED...
...HAS BEEN KILLING INNOCENT PEOPLE...
SHAKKA SHAKKA SHAKKA

...LONG ENOUGH!
WHOOOOM
IT STOPS HERE, DRACO!
SO. THE PREVIOUS MANAGEMENT DID HAVE AN ACE UP ITS TATTERED SLEEVE.
I DON'T WORK FOR ANY MANAGEMENT, BYTE-FACE!
AND I DON'T GIVE A SHOCK FOR THIS TINSEL-TOWN TRASH!
BUT I OWE THE WORLD SOMETHING NOW! I'LL SPEND THE REST OF MY LIFE HERE PAYING IT OFF --

TONGUE LASHINGS

LIA PELOSI
ASSISTANT EDITOR

JOEY CAVALIERI
EDITOR

C/O MARVEL COMICS GROUP
387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10016

ATTENTION CORRESPONDENTS: ALL LETTERS TO BE CONSIDERED FOR PUBLICATION MUST INCLUDE YOU NAME AND ADDRESS THOUGH WE WILL GLADLY WITHHOLD THAT INFO BY REQUEST.

Out of My Head

It's our very first issue, and we're celebrating with a BIG 2099 CONTEST!

If YOU can tell which pages of this issue were turned into the consistency of runny egg white by some little weasel who isn't fit to walk the earth with people and SHOULD BE GROUND INTO BABY POWDER WITH MY BARE HANDS, and had to be reconstructed with what meager resources we could muster...YOU can win! Be one of the FIRST THREE to write an' tell us which pages were turned to soap scum in a freak accident thanks to some INKSTAIN WHO, IN A COUNTRY WHERE THEY HAD SOME DECENT CRIME LAWS, WOULD HAVE HIS HANDS CUT OFF AT THE SHOULDERS, and WIN:

1) A GOLD X-MEN 2099 #1!
2) A 2099 SKETCHBOOK!
3) The 2099 LIMITED Ashcan!
4) RAVAGE 2099 #1!
5) An X-MEN 2099 promo poster!
6) The original 2099 promo poster, featuring DOOM, SPIDEY, THE PUNISHER an' RAVAGE!

Sheesh! NOW ask what an editor does all day. I need a laugh.

Dear causers of the big bang in the Marvel Universe,

I'm extremely delighted that you've decided to give the Not-So-Jolly Green Giant his own series! This'll be a good step for him career-wise. All I want now is a short release date so that I can get my hands on it as soon as possible!

About the villains that the Hulk 2099 is fighting. I realize that he's new and has few narratives yet but I'm already tired of the Godzilla theme. That is, fighting one monster after another. Why not try something other than genetic experiments against him? How about mutants or a technological wonder? I liked the mile-long mall: it was a different and original idea.

In 2099 Unlimited #5, a Hulk/Hulk 2099 crossover was suggested. I agree, but don't create too many present/future crossovers. 2099 would lose its uniqueness and maybe a little of its personality.

Time to check out. So, until DC really kills off the S.Man, "Anger is an energy," "Yeah, Right" (I wonder where I got that from?)

And hurry up with that E-Mail line!

Dustin "Wolf" Kent
4813 Duboise NW
Piedmont, OK 37078

Dustin, we hope Draco is enough of a break from the "Godzilla" thing! As for that E-Mail line, you can reach Matt (Future B) and Lia (FutureGirl) on America Online, and don't forget to check out the 2099 folder in the Comics Forum!

Hey! And don't forget the great cover by Adam Kubert & Kevin Nowlan!
—Lia

NEXT:
The "Mean, Green and Ugly" one confronts the peerless power of Draco! Reserve your seat for this match now...preferably one where you won't get hit with shrapnel! Gerry, Malcolm and Chris'll be here! Will you?

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ADAM KUBERT
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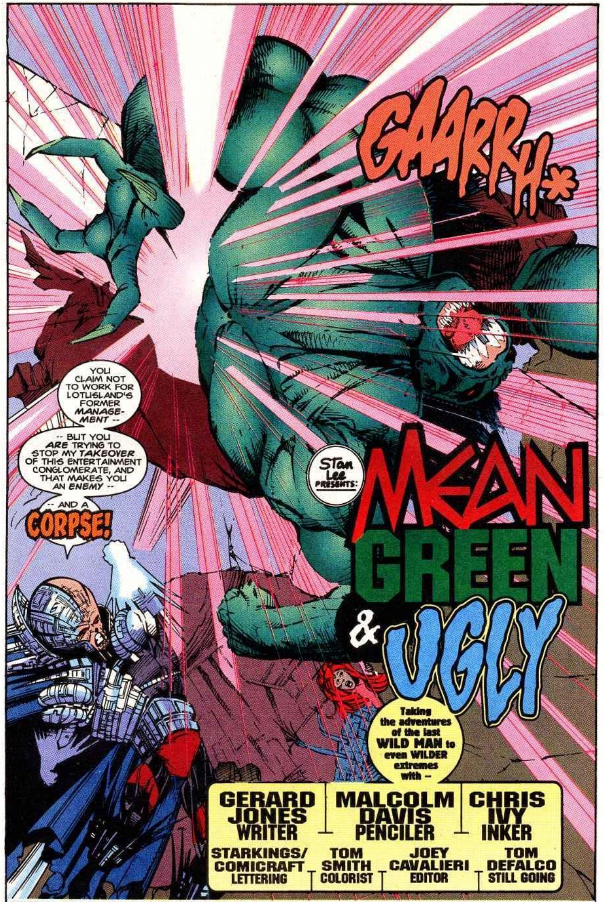

HULK 2099™ Vol. 1, No. 2, January, 1995. Published by MARVEL COMICS. Terry Stewart, President. Stan Lee, Publisher. Michael Hobson, Group Vice President, Publishing. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, NY 10016. **Application to mail at second class postage is pending at New York, N.Y. and at additional mailing offices.** Published monthly. Copyright © 1994 Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc. All rights reserved. Price $1.50 per copy in the U.S. and $2.05 in Canada. Subscription rate for 12 issues: $18.00 U.S.; $30.00 foreign; and Canadian subscribers must add $10.00 for postage and GST. GST #R127032852. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. This periodical may not be sold except by authorized dealers and is sold subject to the condition that it shall not be sold or distributed with any part of its cover or markings removed, nor in a mutilated condition. HULK 2099 (including all prominent characters featured in this issue and the distinctive likenesses thereof) is a trademark of MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP, INC. **POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO HULK 2099, c/o MARVEL DIRECT MARKETING INC./SUBSCRIPTION DEPT., P.O. BOX 1979, DANBURY, CT 06813-1979. TELEPHONE # (203) 743-5331. PRINTED IN USA.**

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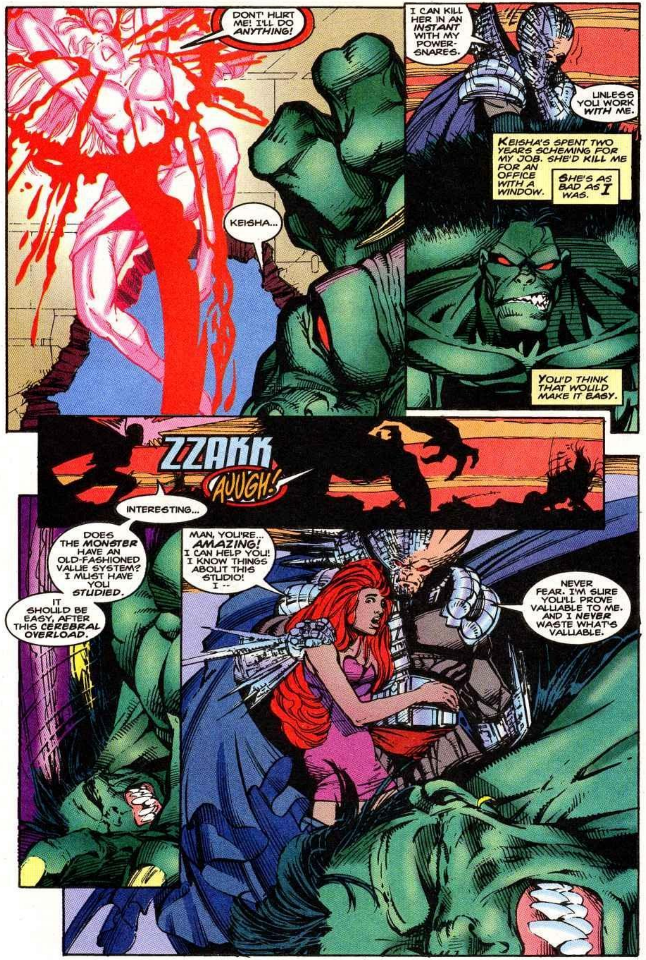

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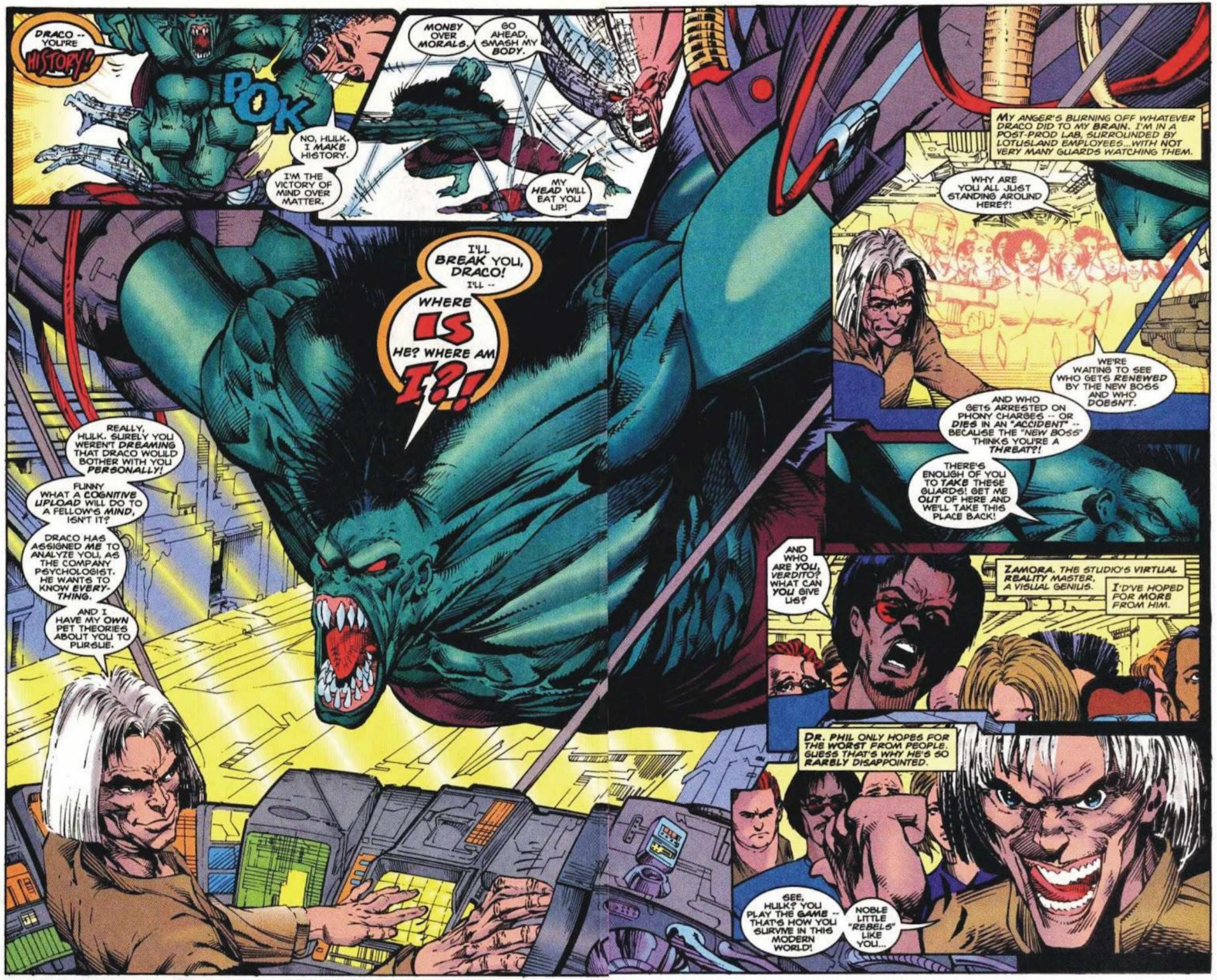
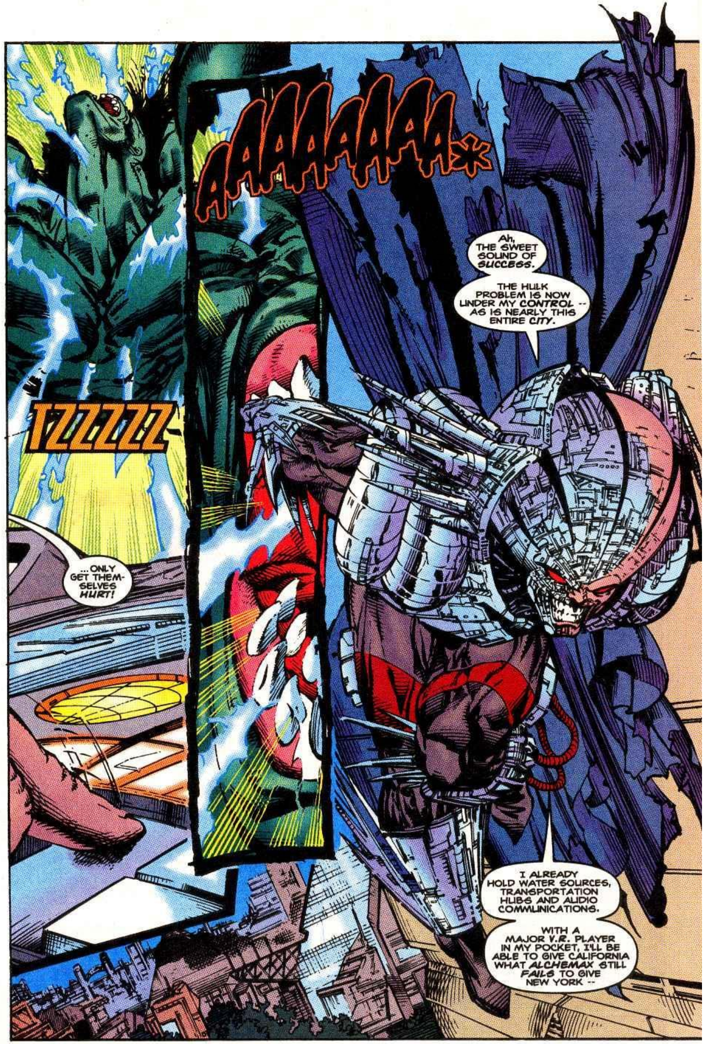
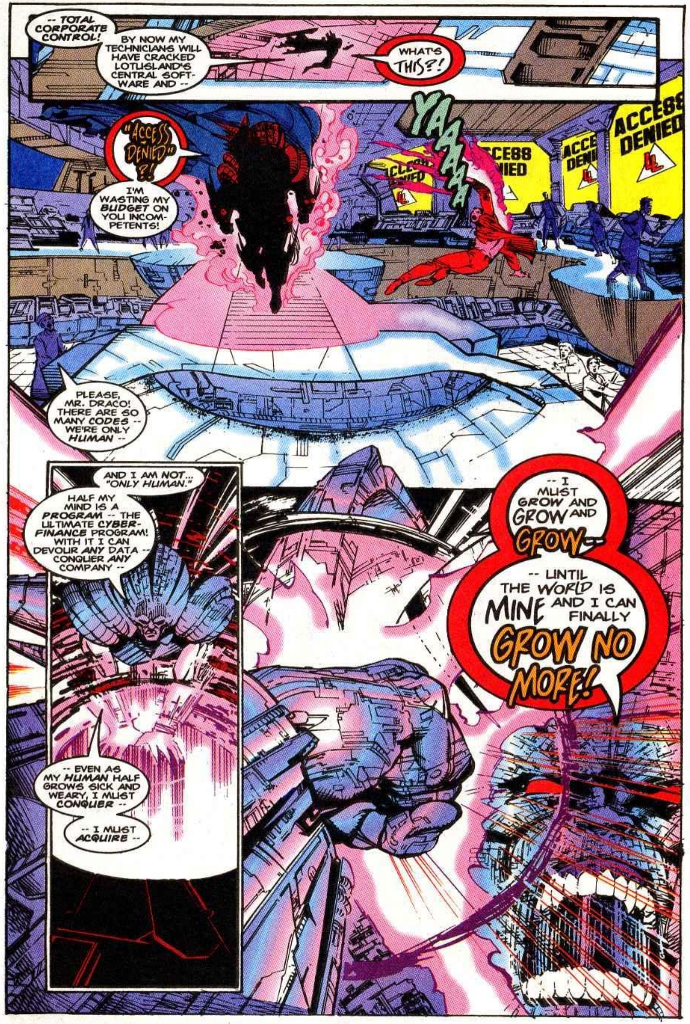
OKAY, THAT CUT IT! NOBODY CALLS ME --
FSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS
YEEEEEEE
OH NO! IT FINALLY HAPPENED!
THE MUSIC BUSINESS DROVE ME INSANE!
CHAKX
CHAX
CHAKX
4K
BY THE SPIRITS OF THE FOREST WE DECLARE YOU --
-- WARRIORS OF THE HUMAN TRIBE!
WELL, IT'S GOTTA BE BETTER THAN MUSAC!
I THINK.


DRACO -- YOU'RE HISTORY!
POK
NO, HULK. I MAKE HISTORY.
I'M THE VICTORY OF MIND OVER MATTER.
MONEY OVER MORALS.
GO AHEAD, SMASH MY BODY.
MY HEAD WILL EAT YOU UP!
I'LL BREAK YOU, DRACO! I'LL -- WHERE IS HE? WHERE AM I?!
REALLY, HULK. SURELY YOU WEREN'T DREAMING THAT DRACO WOULD BOTHER WITH YOU PERSONALLY!
FUNNY WHAT A COGNITIVE UPLOAD WILL DO TO A FELLOW'S MIND, ISN'T IT?
DRACO HAS ASSIGNED ME TO ANALYZE YOU, AS THE COMPANY PSYCHOLOGIST. HE WANTS TO KNOW EVERY-THING.
AND I HAVE MY OWN PET THEORIES ABOUT YOU TO PURSUE.
MY ANGER'S BURNING OFF WHATEVER DRACO DID TO MY BRAIN. I'M IN A POST-PROD LAB, SURROUNDED BY LOTUSLAND EMPLOYEES...WITH NOT VERY MANY GUARDS WATCHING THEM.
WHY ARE YOU ALL JUST STANDING AROUND HERE?!
WE'RE WAITING TO SEE WHO GETS RENEWED BY THE NEW BOSS AND WHO DOESN'T.
AND WHO GETS ARRESTED ON PHONY CHARGES -- OR DIES IN AN "ACCIDENT" -- BECAUSE THE "NEW BOSS" THINKS YOU'RE A THREAT?!
THERE'S ENOUGH OF YOU TO TAKE THESE GUARDS! GET ME OUT OF HERE AND WE'LL TAKE THIS PLACE BACK!
AND WHO ARE YOU, VERDITO? WHAT CAN YOU GIVE US?
ZAMORA. THE STUDIO'S VIRTUAL REALITY MASTER, A VISUAL GENIUS.
I'D'VE HOPED FOR MORE FROM HIM.
DR. PHIL ONLY HOPES FOR THE WORST FROM PEOPLE. GUESS THAT'S WHY HE'S SO RARELY DISAPPOINTED.
SEE, HULK? YOU PLAY THE GAME -- THAT'S HOW YOU SURVIVE IN THIS MODERN WORLD!
NOBLE LITTLE "REBELS" LIKE YOU...


AAAAAAAA*
Ah, THE SWEET SOUND OF SUCCESS.
THE HULK PROBLEM IS NOW UNDER MY CONTROL -- AS IS NEARLY THIS ENTIRE CITY.
TZZZZZ
...ONLY GET THEMSELVES HURT!
I ALREADY HOLD WATER SOURCES, TRANSPORTATION HUBS AND AUDIO COMMUNICATIONS.
WITH A MAJOR V.R. PLAYER IN MY POCKET, I'LL BE ABLE TO GIVE CALIFORNIA WHAT ALCHEMAX STILL FAILS TO GIVE NEW YORK --


-- TOTAL CORPORATE CONTROL!
BY NOW MY TECHNICIANS WILL HAVE CRACKED LOTUSLAND'S CENTRAL SOFTWARE AND --
WHAT'S THIS?!
"ACCESS DENIED"?!
I'M WASTING MY BUDGET ON YOU INCOMPETENTS!
YAAAAA
ACCESS DENIED
ACCESS DENIED
PLEASE, MR. DRACO! THERE ARE SO MANY CODES -- WE'RE ONLY HUMAN --
AND I AM NOT... "ONLY HUMAN."
HALF MY MIND IS A PROGRAM -- THE ULTIMATE CYBER-FINANCE PROGRAM! WITH IT I CAN DEVOUR ANY DATA -- CONQUER ANY COMPANY --
-- EVEN AS MY HUMAN HALF GROWS SICK AND WEARY, I MUST CONQUER --
-- I MUST ACQUIRE --
-- I MUST GROW AND GROW AND GROW --
-- UNTIL THE WORLD IS MINE AND I CAN FINALLY GROW NO MORE!

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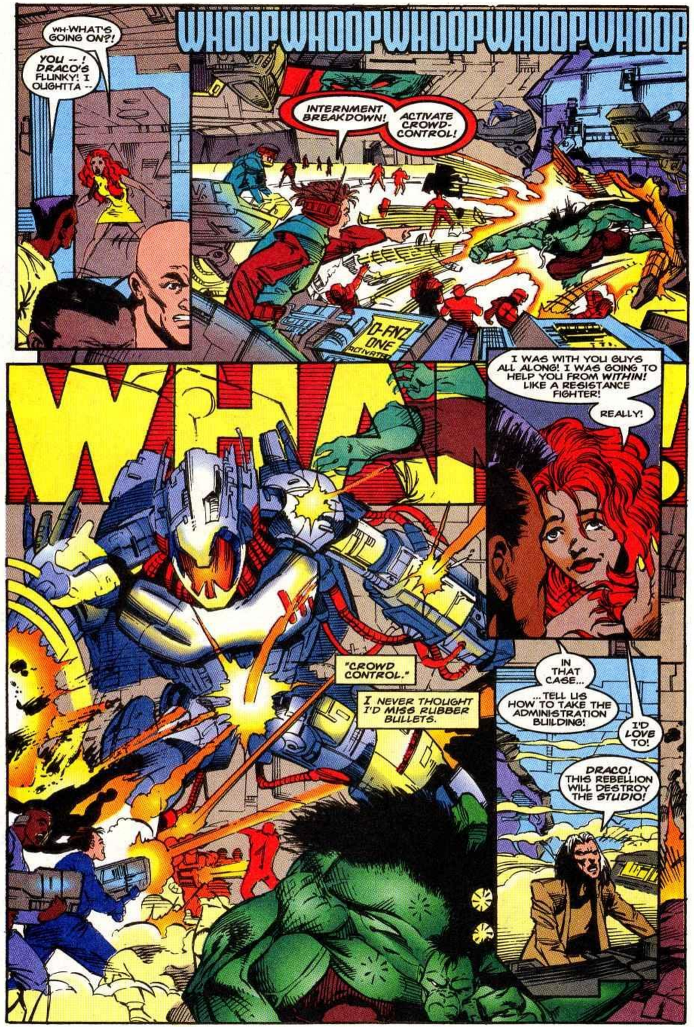
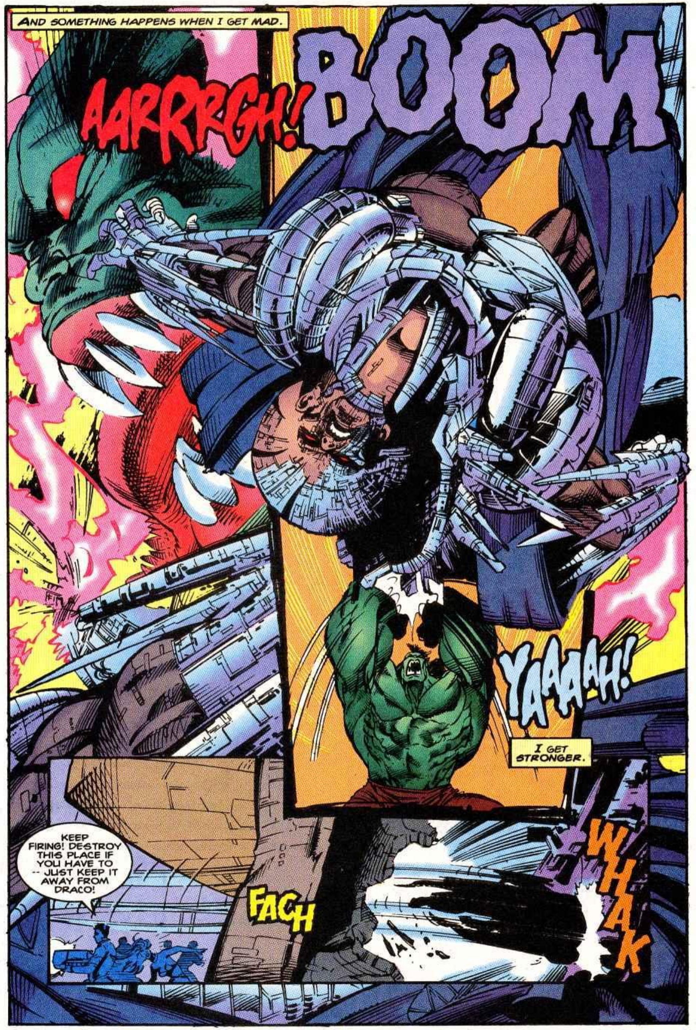
GET THEIR WEAPONS!
WHAT--?
POOM
NHK
BURN THEM! THIS ISN'T SUPPOSED TO HAPPEN!
I KNOW THEIR PSYCHOLOGICAL PROFILES!
GET 'EM!
THEIR GUNS -- WE CAN'T --
KEEP FIGHTING!
THEY DON'T HAVE A CHANCE --
-- WITHOUT SOME MUSCLE.
GET ME OUT OF THIS THING!

ZAMORA --
CAN'T... MOVE MY LEGS...
CAN'T... STAND...
BUT... I... CAN...
RRRRRIP
...FALL!!
NO.
FRAKKA-BOOM
I GOTTA REMEMBER TO THANK THAT GUY.

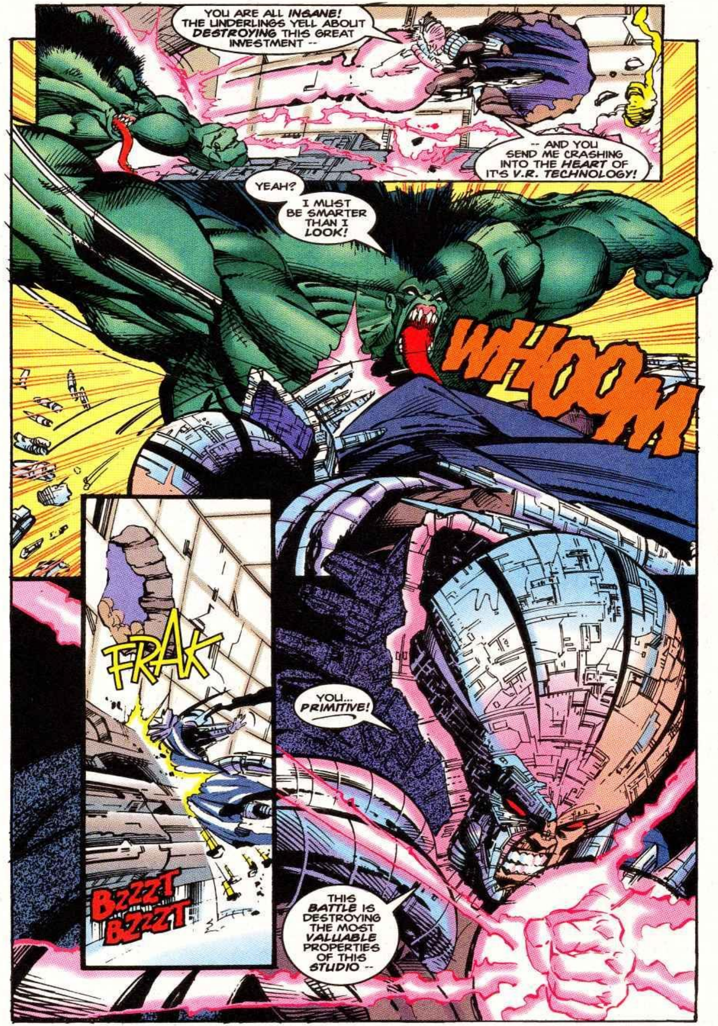

WH-WHAT'S GOING ON?!
YOU -- ! DRACO'S FLUNKY! I OUGHTTA --
WHOOPWHOOPWHOOPWHOOPWHOOP
INTERNMENT BREAKDOWN!
ACTIVATE CROWD-CONTROL!
WHA!
I WAS WITH YOU GUYS ALL ALONG! I WAS GOING TO HELP YOU FROM WITHIN! LIKE A RESISTANCE FIGHTER!
REALLY!
"CROWD CONTROL."
I NEVER THOUGHT I'D MISS RUBBER BULLETS.
IN THAT CASE...
...TELL US HOW TO TAKE THE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING!
I'D LOVE TO!
DRACO! THIS REBELLION WILL DESTROY THE STUDIO!

NO. NOT MY STUDIO.
NOT MY INVESTMENT.
BACK TO YOUR WORK-STATIONS. BACK TO YOUR WORK-STATIONS.
EASY TO SAY --
-- FOR A FREAKIN' MACHINE!
BWOOOM
IN CASE YOU HAVEN'T GOT IT YET, I DON'T LIKE MACHINES.
I ESPECIALLY DON'T LIKE MACHINES THAT TURN PEOPLE INTO INTER-CHANGEABLE PARTS.
AND WHEN I MEET ONE...

-- IT MAKES ME WANT TO BREAK SOMETHING!
RRRRAK
MY DROID!
MY MONEY!
YOU ARE A SAVAGE!
CHOOM
YOU DESTROY MY INVESTMENT -- WITH NO PURPOSE -- NO PROFIT --
SSHAZZAKK
HYAARGH!
-- ONLY YOUR WORTHLESS EMOTIONS!
FUNNY HE SHOULD MENTION EMOTIONS.
SEE, GETTING BLASTED WITH TWO MILLION VOLTS MAKES ME MAD...



AND SOMETHING HAPPENS WHEN I GET MAD.
AARRRGH!
BOOM
YAAAAH!
I GET STRONGER.
KEEP FIRING! DESTROY THIS PLACE IF YOU HAVE TO -- JUST KEEP IT AWAY FROM DRACO!
FACH
WHAK


YOU ARE ALL *INSANE!* THE UNDERLINGS YELL ABOUT *DESTROYING* THIS GREAT INVESTMENT --
-- AND YOU SEND ME CRASHING INTO THE *HEART* OF IT'S *V.R. TECHNOLOGY!*
YEAH?
I MUST BE SMARTER THAN I *LOOK!*
WHOOM
FRAK
YOU... *PRIMITIVE!*
BZZZT BZZZT
THIS *BATTLE* IS DESTROYING THE MOST *VALUABLE* PROPERTIES OF THIS *STUDIO* --

--AND I NEVER *WASTE* WHAT IS *VALUABLE!*
SHAKKKK
GONE.
FOR A SECOND I WANT HIM *BACK*, SO I CAN GET MY HAND AROUND THAT EGG HE CALLS A *HEAD*... AND *SQUEEZE*.
THEN I SEE HIS GOONS SURRENDERING...
I SEE THE "UNDERLINGS" TAKING OVER THEIR OWN STUDIO.
ZAMORA!
I'M GOING TO GET YOU A *DOCTOR*, GUY. I WANT YOU *HEALTHY* --
-- TO BE PART OF THE NEW *LOTUS-LAND!*

BULLPEN BULLETINS

MARVEL COMICS

STAN'S SOAPBOX

Hi, True Believers!

I've something important to tell you! I don't know if you're ready for it, but I think it's better for you to learn it from me than to pick up the information from some kids on the street! So here goes ...

Here in sunny Los Angeles I've been 3,000 miles away from the mighty Marvel Bullpen for almost 15 years now! And y'know what? Even though it's a blast doing movies, TV and animation, I miss the excitement and the sheer, raw, matchless creative rush of working on comic books! So hang on, heroes, 'cause here comes my big announcement!

After consulting with our peerless prez, Merry **Terry Stewart**, and everybody's favorite editor-in-chief, **Tom DeFalco**, we decided it was time for me to get back into the ball game — time for me to play on the side of Marvel in the big leagues of comicdom again! Yep! You heard it right! From our halcyon headquarters here in California, I'm gonna start creating and producing a new line of comics for the hallowed House of Ideas — to go on sale sometime in '95!

Will the new mags be part of the magnificent Marvel Universe? Nope! The gang of geniuses in our batty bullpen are doing just great and don't need any help from me. Instead, I'll lay the foundation for creating a brand *new* universe — well, maybe not a whole universe, maybe just a planet or two, or even a single continent — or a country. A city? How about a neighborhood? A shopping mall? An apartment, perhaps? As you can tell, I'm just as modest and humble as ever!

Since I'll still be spearheading our show-biz ventures, I'll need help, of course, to get the new books started. Therefore, I've shanghaied one of Marvel's comic book commandos, Riotous **Rob Tokar**, from our New York editorial staff. Daredevil Rob is gonna brave the earthquakes, floods, fires and drive-by shootings here in L.A. just to make sure I don't blow the bit! And one of our Hollywood staffers, Meritorious **Mallory Liles**, is also coming along for the ride. That's it! Just us three Marvel-teers against the world!

In case you're bustin' to find out what we'll *call* our nutty new line of comics, here's a subtle hint. Notice how I always sign off these columns? There's a certain word I tend to use...

Excelsior!

Stan Lee

HYPE BOX

Rogue's past comes back to haunt her in the ROGUE 4-issue Limited Series beginning this week, according to Associate Editor **Lisa Patrick**. The plot, which Lisa promised is "a lot of fun," has the head of the Assassins' Guild, Belladonna, seeking revenge on Rogue, because of the events of the Gambit Limited Series. Belladonna is looking for Rogue's weak spots, and she finds 'em: Cody (the comatose boy who Rogue kissed years ago) and Rogue's current love, Gambit! Thus begins a race against time for Rogue to save the two people she cares about the most!

The creative team for the ROGUE Limited Series is writer **Howard Mackie**, penciler **Mike Weiringo**, and inker **Terry Austin**. Lisa described the art for ROGUE as being "beautiful! It's very cool!" Although Rogue has been around for a few years, this is her very first Limited Series. Lisa noted that "Rogue has a lot of history. It's time for us to start exploring it."

QUESTION OF THE MONTH

In honor of Thanksgiving, our favorite Pilgrim-related holiday, we thought we'd ask a food question this month. The following query was posed to some of Marvel's best and brightest: *What kind of food do you eat when you read comic books?*

Joe Phillips (Penciler, SILVER SURFER): I like to drink Snapple!

Mort Todd (Editor, MARVEL MUSIC): Dry Captain Crunch cereal, right out of the box.

Nancy Poletti (Assistant Editor, BEST OF MARVEL 1994): Beefaroni is good food!

Dave Taylor (Penciler, FORCE WORKS): My favorite snack is peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. Sometimes the jelly drips onto the comic book page, and it can really enhance the artwork!

Tom Daning (Associate Editor, PRINCE VALIANT): Usually I don't eat while I read my comic books. Usually, it's quite the opposite!

Mike Lackey (Editor, REN & STIMPY): I don't read comics!

Tom Grindberg (Penciler, DAREDEVIL): Tostitos and salsa. And after that, Edie's Tin Roof Ice Cream!

Glenn Herdling (Writer, BLACKWULF): When I read DC's, I eat pizza. When I read Marvels, I wear gloves!

Janice Chiang (Letterer, THUNDERSTRIKE): I eat all my meals reading comic books!

"Professor" James Felder (Assistant editor, BLAZE): I like eating greasy food when I read comic books! It's cool because it leaves these really weird stains on the paper, and you can see through to the next page!

Richard Ashford (Editor, CONAN): I usually drink tea, but I avoid sticky buns!

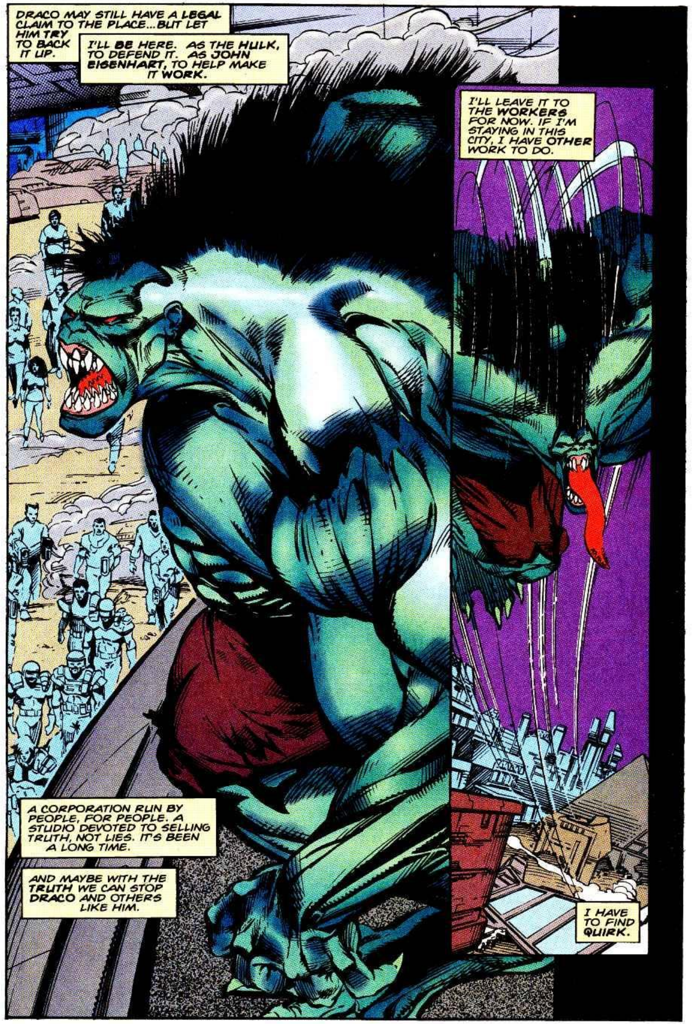
John Ostrander (Writer, BISHOP Limited Series): If you're going to be traditional, one should read a comic with a glass of milk and chocolate chip cookies!

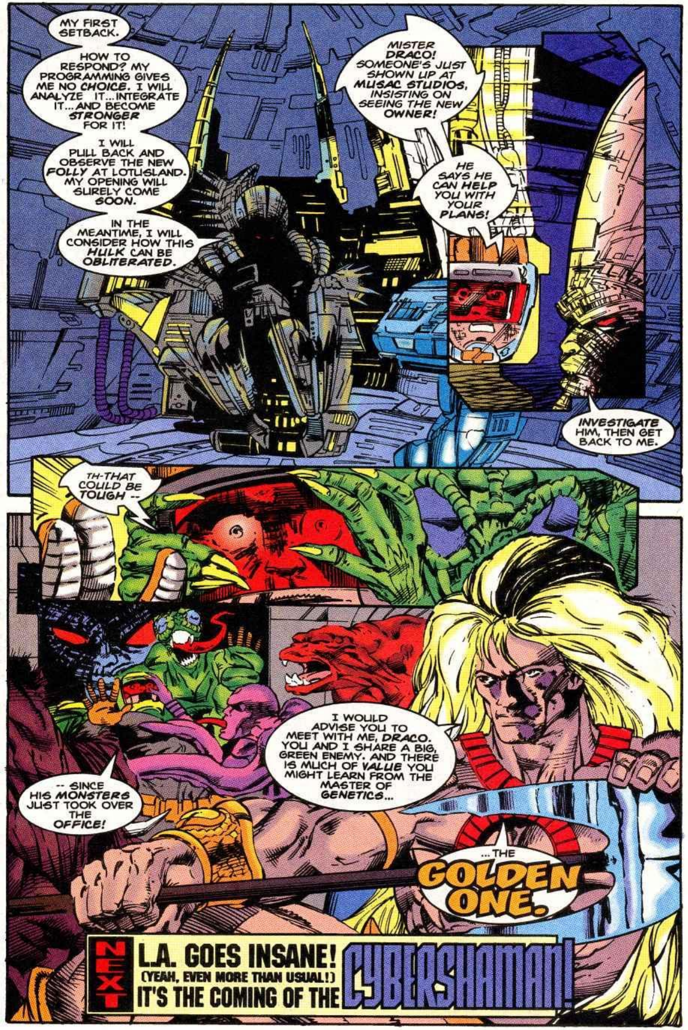
Tim Tuohy (Editor, REN & STIMPY QUARTERLY): Breakfast cereal. I like Coco Krispies with chocolate milk, because I can't wait for the milk to turn chocolatey!

NOW ON SALE

- ☐ **AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #397:** What has six arms and wants to kill Spidey? By DeMatteis/Bagley/Mahlstedt!
- ☐ **BARBIE #49:** You'll be thankful for some tasty Thanksgiving stories! By Slate/Wilshire!
- ☐ **BEAVIS & BUTT-HEAD TPB: TRASHCAN EDITION:** The suckiest stories/art By Ricko "the Sicko" Parker!
- ☐ **BISHOP #2 OF 4:** Bishop must climb **Mount Joy** — correction, must *stop* Mountjoy! By Ostrander/Pacheco/C. Smith!
- ☐ **BLACKWULF #8:** Trapped on an alien world ravaged by **Tantalus**! By Herdling/Medina/Anderson!
- ☐ **CONAN CLASSIC #8:** Gargantuan gila monsters! No, that's not a new grunge band! By Thomas/Windsor-Smith/Sutton!
- ☐ **CONAN SAGA #94:** Believe it or not — it's **Belit**! By Thomas/Buscema/Chan!
- ☐ **GENERATION X DELUXE #3:** **Penance** must be penalized! By Lobdell/Bachalo/Buckingham!
- ☐ **GHOST RIDER #57:** When **Wolverine** shows up — can the **Next Wave** be far behind? By Mackie/Larroca/Mela!
- ☐ **GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY #56:** It's time to elect a new leader! By Gallagher/West/Montano!
- ☐ **HULK 2099 #2:** It's Hulk vs. **Draco** in the battle for Hollywood 2099! By Jones/M. Davis/Ivy!
- ☐ **THE LITTLE MERMAID #5:** When Ariel takes **Aunt Crustacea** sight-seeing — look out! By Robbins/Corzon/Hunt!
- ☐ **MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS #171:** **Doc Samson** analyzes **Vengeance**!
- ☐ **NIGHTMARE #2 OF 4:** Nightmare quits his day job, and **Exile** takes over! By Nocenti/Bennett/Witherby!
- ☐ **NIGHT THRASHER #18:** Fighting alongside the **Black Panther** in Africa! By Busiek/Nichols/Rubinstein et. al.!
- ☐ **PUNISHER WAR ZONE #35:** Frank dives into the **River of Blood**! By Dixon/J. Kubert!
- ☐ **RAVAGE 2099 #26:** It's a savage showdown — and may the Beast-Man win! By Mills & Skinner/Bennett/Adams!
- ☐ **ROGUE #1 OF 4:** The mega-popular mutant in her very first limited series! By Mackie/Wieringo/ Austin!
- ☐ **SECRET DEFENDERS #23:** A mystery magician is assembling his own team of Defenders! By Brevoort & Kanterovich/Wylie/DeZuniga!
- ☐ **SILVER SABLE #32: Hammerhead** hijacks a train — and Sable is pregnant! By Wright/Purcell/Eklund!
- ☐ **ULTRA X-MEN COLLECTION #2 OF 5:** From painted cards to painted comics!
- ☐ **WAR MACHINE #10: Iron Man & Force Works** lend a hand against the **Mandarin**! By Kaminski & Benson/Gecko/Eklund!
- ☐ **WOLVERINE DELUXE #89:** Wolvie bangs skulls with **Ghost Rider**! By Hama/Kubert/Farmer!
- ☐ **X-FACTOR DELUXE #110: Lila Chaney** returns! What will Guido do? By Dezago/Duursema/Milgrom!
- ☐ **X-MEN ADVENTURES SEASON 2 #12:** Time for a trip to the **Savage Land**! By Macchio/Hebert/Adams!
- ☐ **X-MEN: THE EARLY YEARS #9:** Don't make any deals with **Lucifer**! He cheats! By Lee/Kirby/Stone!
- ☐ **X-MEN SPECTACULAR: A MUTANT CALLED LEGION #2 OF 4:** Classic Legion tales! By Claremont/Sienkiewicz & Cockrum/ Wiacek!

NEXT WEEK'S BOOKS: *DOOM 2099* BATTLES HIS DOPPELGANGER ... SHADOWCAT VS. NIGHTCRAWLER FOR THE SOULSWORD ... *MORBIUS* HAS A FUNERAL ... MICRO DESIGNS A NEW *PUNISHER* ... *DR. STRANGE* SEEKS THE INFINITY GEMS ... WHAT IF *STRYFE* KILLED THE X-MEN ... *NOVA* BATTLES DEATHSTORM ... MAN-THING AND SCARLET WITCH GUEST STAR IN *MIDNIGHT SONS UNLIMITED* ... *THE X-MEN* TAKE ON LEGION BIG TIME ... GET MAXED ON MARVEL!





TONGUE LASHINGS

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387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10016

ATTENTION CORRESPONDENTS: ALL LETTERS TO BE CONSIDERED FOR PUBLICATION MUST INCLUDE YOU NAME AND ADDRESS THOUGH WE WILL GLADLY WITHHOLD THAT INFO BY REQUEST.

Out Of My Head

Welcome to Lotusland! Here at 2099, we've gone Kalifornia!

I'm cellular-faxing this to Lia from the champagne-and-piranha-stocked pool. I'm seeing a new therapist to help me get over my free-floating New York hostility. My prescription has changed faster and more often than the executive phone list at Disney. My diet's restricted to Evian and sashimi carved to look like Hostess Sno-Balls. My virtual gym allows me to ski in the Vienna Alps with Gustave Klimt and Sarah Bernhardt without leaving the office. I'm working on a screenplay about my near-death experience due to caffeine withdrawal entitled "Sing Sweet and Low, Sweet Chariot." I'm having my comic book collection airlifted to the Beverly Hills Hotel. I complain loudly about the lack of decent pastrami like the rest of us transplanted Kalifornians. I have a wardrobe consultant who matches my necktie and tasseled loafers to my Porsche and helps me avoid gang colors. I'm taking lunch with Oliver Stone about that PUNISHER 2099 movie. Whaddaya think, Juliette Lewis as Vendetta? Bobcat Goldthwait as Matt Axel? Talking car or no talking car? I've become the fully-realized, career-driven, spiritually-reawakened Renaissance Man I've always striven to become. In short, I'm Fabian Nicieza.

I'm lousing up Gerry Jones' opportunities to do all these jokes. He was in NYC this week, and we got to nail down the whole year's worth of continuity on HULK 2099. Twelve months of unrestrained West Coast wildness with a literal smash finish come December. More supporting cast members, more villains and more perplexing plot twists, engineered to, at the very least, make our peerless penciler, Malcolm Davis, one happy individual.

Gerry will be back for 2099 Writers' Summit III, wherein he, Pat 'n' Tony, Peter, John, some surprise guests, Matt, Lia and myself will go out of our way to reconfigure our little corner of the Exploding Plastic Inevitable Marvel Space-Time Continuum in a major way. I'll keep you posted.

FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO *DIDN'T* COME IN LATE...

Welcome back. Our snotty contest from last issue is still in effect. So get those entries in now. Or don't, and *we* keep the prizes.

FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO CAME IN LATE ...

Just in case you found this magazine on an airplane or in a hair salon or in the vault of a sunken submarine or clutched in Akhenaton's mummified fingers, you oughta know that we publish some other fine titles all set in the year A.D. 2099 (that's *A*ppreciably *D*emented). Here are just *some* of 'em.

NEXT ISSUE:

MARVEL COMICS
3
FEB
HULK
2099
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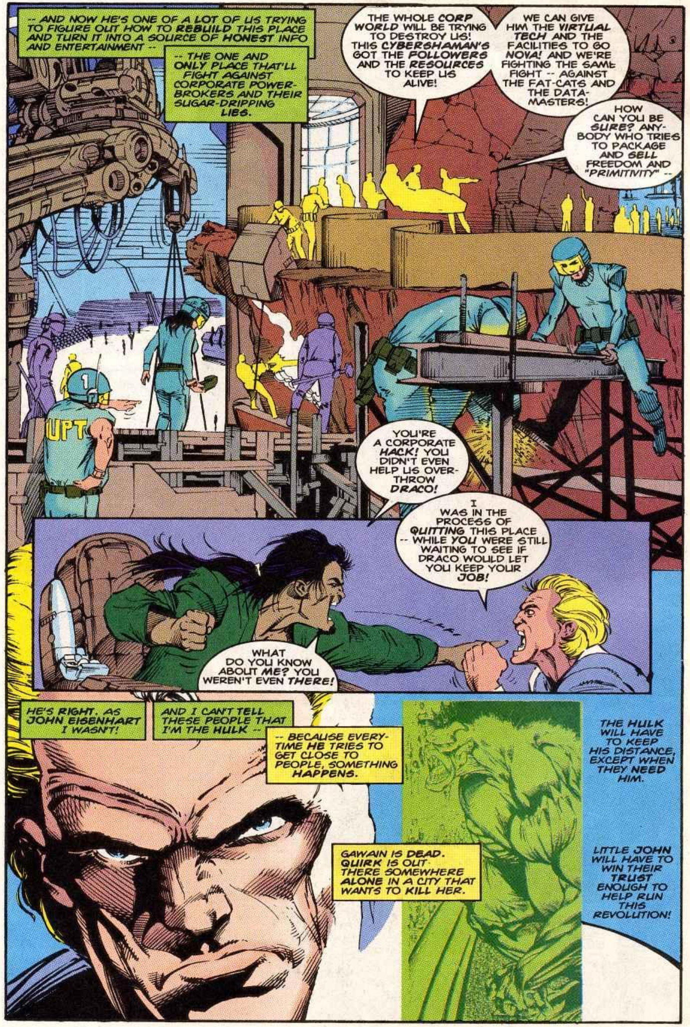
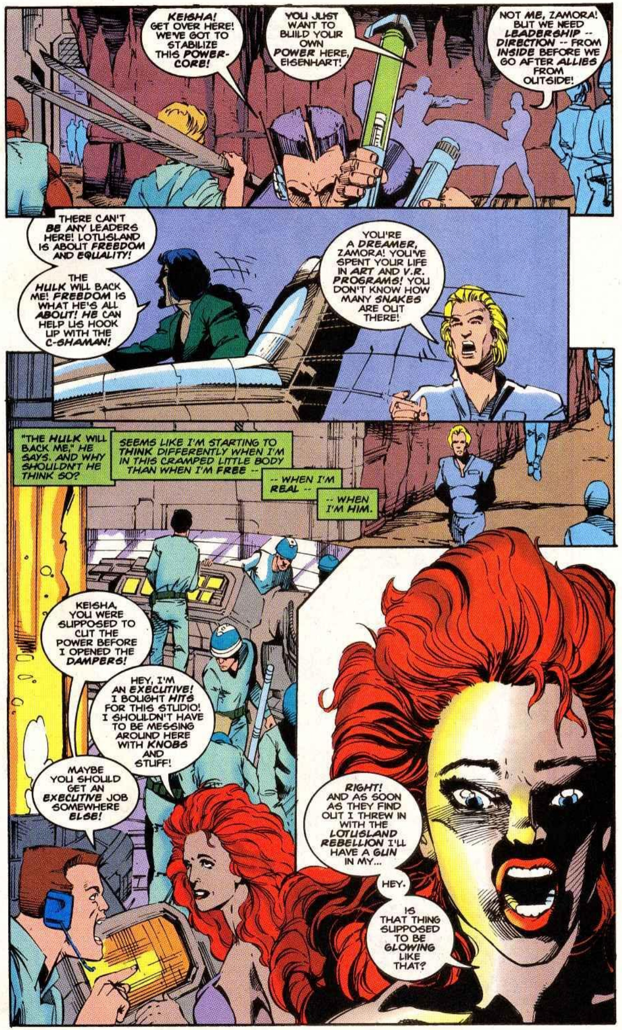
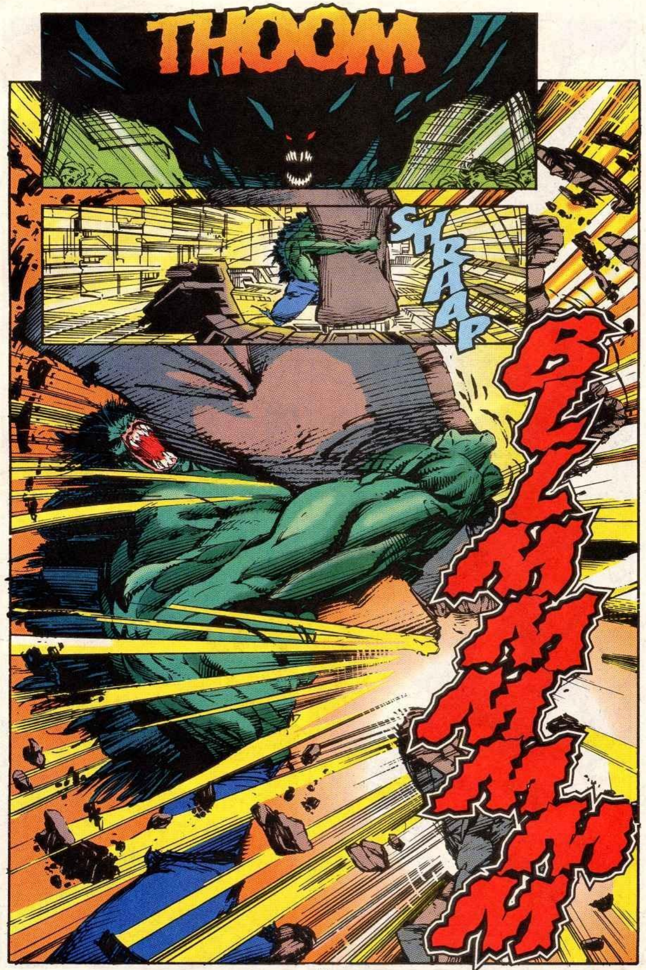
JOIN THE RELIGION THAT LET'S YOU DANCE IN THE STREETS --
-- AND GIVES YOU THE POWER TO KEEP THEM FROM STOPPING YOU!
SOON NO ONE WILL BE ABLE TO!
THE ELECTRONIC BOXES THAT TRAP THE HUMAN SOUL WILL GO UP IN SMOKE!
TALK ABOUT AN ANTIDOTE TO CIVILIZATION!
JOINING IS AS EASY AS PUSHING A BUTTON!
I SAY HE'S IT, EISEN-HART!
THE OTHERS THINK I SHOULD CONSULT WITH YOU -- BECAUSE YOU USED TO HUNT DOWN NEW RELIGIONS.
PERSONALLY, I DON'T TRUST YOU... BUT LOTUS-LAND IS A DEMOCRACY NOW.
THANKS FOR THE HONESTY.
HOLD THE ELEVATOR!
HIS NAME'S ZAMORA. HE LED THE REVOLT THAT BEAT DRACO AND PUT THIS STUDIO IN THE HANDS OF THE WORKERS --
(OKAY, THE HULK LED IT, BUT ZAMORA NEARLY GOT HIMSELF KILLED FIGHTING FOR IT --)


-- AND NOW HE'S ONE OF A LOT OF US TRYING TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO REBUILD THIS PLACE AND TURN IT INTO A SOURCE OF HONEST INFO AND ENTERTAINMENT --
-- THE ONE AND ONLY PLACE THAT'LL FIGHT AGAINST CORPORATE POWER-BROKERS AND THEIR SUGAR-DRIPPING LIES.
THE WHOLE CORP WORLD WILL BE TRYING TO DESTROY US! THIS CYBERSHAMAN'S GOT THE FOLLOWERS AND THE RESOURCES TO KEEP US ALIVE!
WE CAN GIVE HIM THE VIRTUAL TECH AND THE FACILITIES TO GO NOVA! AND WE'RE FIGHTING THE SAME FIGHT -- AGAINST THE FAT-CATS AND THE DATA-MASTERS!
HOW CAN YOU BE SURE? ANY-BODY WHO TRIES TO PACKAGE AND SELL FREEDOM AND "PRIMITIVITY" --
YOU'RE A CORPORATE HACK! YOU DIDN'T EVEN HELP US OVER-THROW DRACO!
I WAS IN THE PROCESS OF QUITTING THIS PLACE -- WHILE YOU WERE STILL WAITING TO SEE IF DRACO WOULD LET YOU KEEP YOUR JOB!
WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT ME? YOU WEREN'T EVEN THERE!
HE'S RIGHT. AS JOHN EISENHART I WASN'T!
AND I CAN'T TELL THESE PEOPLE THAT I'M THE HULK --
-- BECAUSE EVERY-TIME HE TRIES TO GET CLOSE TO PEOPLE, SOMETHING HAPPENS.
THE HULK WILL HAVE TO KEEP HIS DISTANCE, EXCEPT WHEN THEY NEED HIM.
GAWAIN IS DEAD. QUIRK IS OUT THERE SOMEWHERE ALONE IN A CITY THAT WANTS TO KILL HER.
LITTLE JOHN WILL HAVE TO WIN THEIR TRUST ENOUGH TO HELP RUN THIS REVOLUTION!


KEISHA! GET OVER HERE! WE'VE GOT TO STABILIZE THIS POWER-CORE!
YOU JUST WANT TO BUILD YOUR OWN POWER HERE, EISENHART!
NOT ME, ZAMORA! BUT WE NEED LEADERSHIP -- DIRECTION -- FROM INSIDE BEFORE WE GO AFTER ALLIES FROM OUTSIDE!
THERE CAN'T BE ANY LEADERS HERE! LOTUSLAND IS ABOUT FREEDOM AND EQUALITY!
THE HULK WILL BACK ME! FREEDOM IS WHAT HE'S ALL ABOUT! HE CAN HELP US HOOK UP WITH THE C-SHAMAN!
YOU'RE A DREAMER, ZAMORA! YOU'VE SPENT YOUR LIFE IN ART AND V.R. PROGRAMS! YOU DON'T KNOW HOW MANY SNAKES ARE OUT THERE!
"THE HULK WILL BACK ME," HE SAYS. AND WHY SHOULDN'T HE THINK SO?
SEEMS LIKE I'M STARTING TO THINK DIFFERENTLY WHEN I'M IN THIS CRAMPED LITTLE BODY THAN WHEN I'M FREE --
-- WHEN I'M REAL --
-- WHEN I'M HIM.
KEISHA, YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO CUT THE POWER BEFORE I OPENED THE DAMPERS!
HEY, I'M AN EXECUTIVE! I BOUGHT HITS FOR THIS STUDIO! I SHOULDN'T HAVE TO BE MESSING AROUND HERE WITH KNOBS AND STUFF!
MAYBE YOU SHOULD GET AN EXECUTIVE JOB SOMEWHERE ELSE!
RIGHT! AND AS SOON AS THEY FIND OUT I THREW IN WITH THE LOTUSLAND REBELLION I'LL HAVE A GUN IN MY...
HEY.
IS THAT THING SUPPOSED TO BE GLOWING LIKE THAT?

WOULD SOMEBODY PLEASE TELL ME WHERE THE #@$% WE'RE GOING?!
AWAY FROM THE CORPORATE TYRANTS WHO IMPRISONED YOU AND WERE ABOUT TO KILL YOU!
AWAY FROM THE SECURITY DROIDS THAT MAY EVEN NOW BE PROWLING IN PURSUIT OF US! ISN'T THAT ENOUGH, QUIRK?
SO THAT'S SUPPOSED TO EXPLAIN WHY I HAD TO JOIN YOUR "HUMAN TRIBE" AND PUT ON THIS QUIRK, QUEEN OF THE JUNGLE LOOK?
WHERE ARE WE GOING, KWAME?!
IF YOU MUST KNOW...
...WE ARE GOING TO MEET A GOD. ONE WHO WILL GIVE YOU YOUR TRUE PURPOSE IN LIFE!
WHAT, LIKE SINGING AND COMPOSING WAS AN ADOLESCENT PHASE? IF YOU DON'T --
DROIDS!
SHAK
NO! THEY'RE POLICE! BUT WHY ARE THEY AFTER --
YARRH!
KWAME!
ZHAP
MY... SPEAR, QUIRK...
...AIM IT... AND TWIST THE SHAFT...
AND SHOOT COPS?!
LOOK, I'VE FOUGHT SECURITY-THUGS FROM THE CORP-WORLD TRYING TO SILENCE MY SONGS, BUT NEVER --
-- oh, JEEZ.
URB'N
SHAK
SHAK
SHAK SHAK
SOME-THING TELLS ME THAT A Q-AND-A SESSION ISN'T AN OPTION HERE.
SORRY, OFFICERS!
BUT LITTLE QUIRK'S STILL GOT TOO MUCH TO LIVE FOR!



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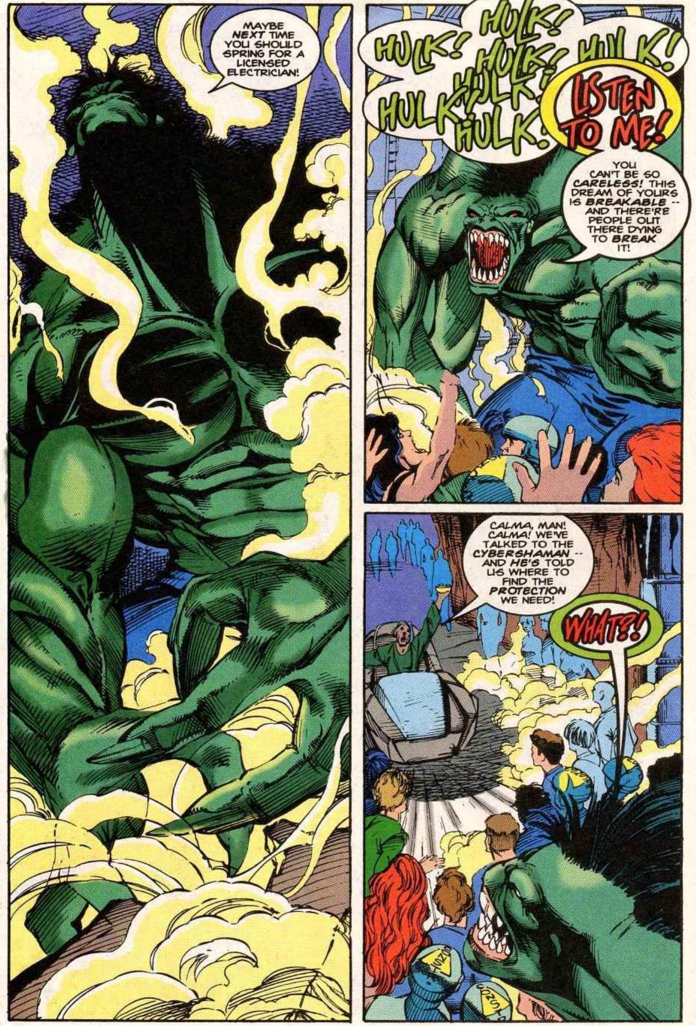

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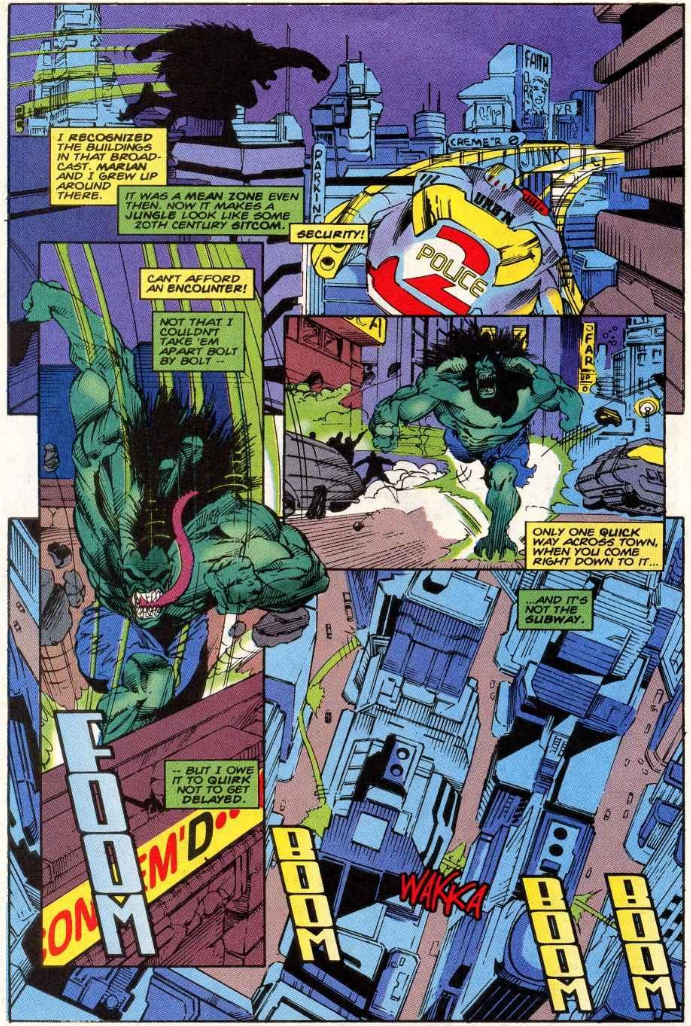
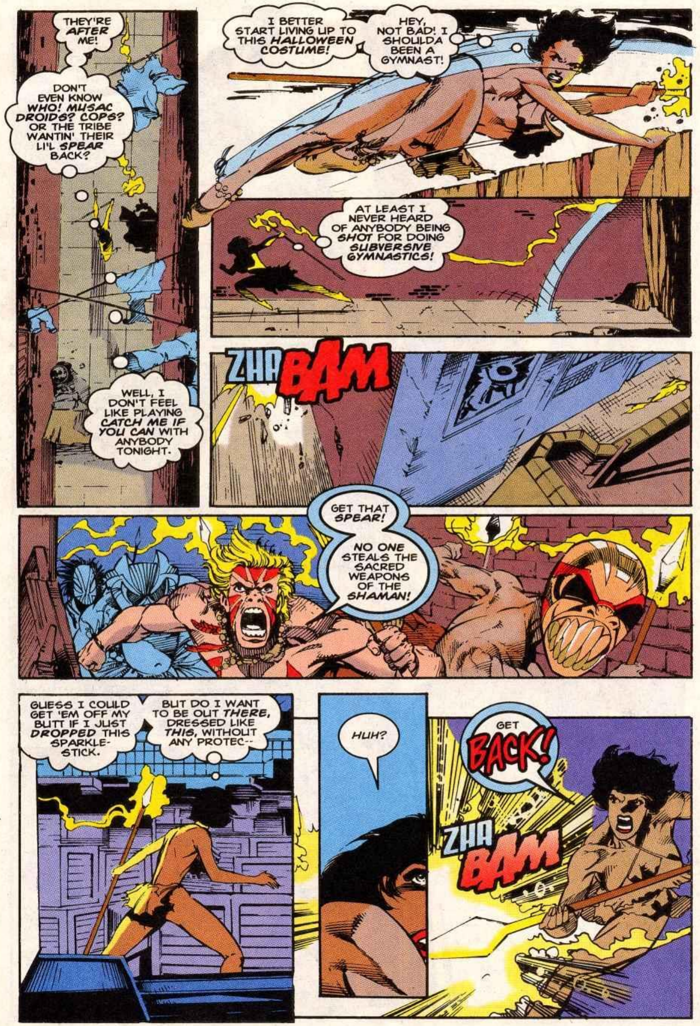
THE TRIBE GOT AWAY -- AND I'VE ARRANGED A SECRET LITTLE PARTY BETWEEN THEM AND SOME OF US WHO CAN SPEAK FOR LOTUSLAND!
CAN'T HEAR WHAT HE'S SAYING ANYMORE. I'M TRYING -- I WANT TO MAKE THESE PEOPLE LOOK AT WHAT THEY'RE DOING --
BUT QUIRK, BLAST IT! SHE COUNTED ON ME, AND I FAILED BEFORE --
-- I WON'T DO IT AGAIN!
WHERE'S HE GOING?
I... DON'T KNOW, KEISHA! BUT NOW WE'VE GOTTA MAKE THAT RENDEZ-VOUS...
"...WE GOTTA GET THE CYBERSHAMAN AND THE TRIBE ON OUR SIDE...
"...'CAUSE WE CAN'T EVEN COUNT ON THE HULK ANYMORE!"


I RECOGNIZED THE BUILDINGS IN THAT BROAD-CAST. MARIAN AND I GREW UP AROUND THERE.
IT WAS A MEAN ZONE EVEN THEN. NOW IT MAKES A JUNGLE LOOK LIKE SOME 20TH CENTURY SITCOM.
SECURITY!
POLICE
CAN'T AFFORD AN ENCOUNTER!
NOT THAT I COULDN'T TAKE 'EM APART BOLT BY BOLT --
ONLY ONE QUICK WAY ACROSS TOWN, WHEN YOU COME RIGHT DOWN TO IT...
...AND IT'S NOT THE SUBWAY.
-- BUT I OWE IT TO QUIRK NOT TO GET DELAYED.
FOOM
BOOM
WAKKA
BOOM
BOOM


THEY'RE AFTER ME!
DON'T EVEN KNOW WHO! MUSAC DROIDS? COPS? OR THE TRIBE WANTIN' THEIR LI'L SPEAR BACK?
I BETTER START LIVING UP TO THIS HALLOWEEN COSTUME!
HEY, NOT BAD! I SHOULDA BEEN A GYMNAST!
AT LEAST I NEVER HEARD OF ANYBODY BEING SHOT FOR DOING SUBVERSIVE GYMNASTICS!
WELL, I DON'T FEEL LIKE PLAYING CATCH ME IF YOU CAN WITH ANYBODY TONIGHT.
ZHA BAM
GET THAT SPEAR!
NO ONE STEALS THE SACRED WEAPONS OF THE SHAMAN!
GUESS I COULD GET 'EM OFF MY BUTT IF I JUST DROPPED THIS SPARKLE-STICK.
BUT DO I WANT TO BE OUT THERE, DRESSED LIKE THIS, WITHOUT ANY PROTEC--
HUH?
GET BACK!
ZHA BAM

I KNOW YOU'RE BUGGED AT ME, QUIRK --
-- BUT DON'T YOU THINK AN ANGRY NOTE WOULD'VE BEEN ENOUGH?
HULK...?
JOHN...?
I THOUGHT YOU TOOK OFF INTO THE DESERT -- AND LEFT US!
I CHANGED MY MIND.
NO. GAWAIN CHANGED IT FOR ME. HE DIED, QUIRK. DIED SAVING ME.
I WON'T LET THAT HAPPEN TO YOU, QUIRK. NOW THE HULK LOOKS AFTER HIS OWN.
ZHA-BA-BA-BA
WELL, BABE...I'M GLAD YOU'RE LOOKIN' NOW!
BAM

THERE SHE IS! LET'S--
BOOM
FRACH
THERE'S SOMETHING IN THERE!
THEN THE TRIBE WILL TAKE HIM OUT!
WE ARE THE POWER OF HUMANITY AGAINST THE MACHINE! OF NATURE AGAINST CYBERNETICS! OF FREEDOM AGAINST CONTROL!
OUR DAY IS HERE, AND NO TOOL OF THE DATA-MASTERS CAN --
WILL YOU JUST SHUT UP AND FIGHT?!
BY THE SPIRITS --!

IT'S HIM!
THE LIBERATOR-- WHO DEFEATED DRACO AND FREED LOTUS-LAND!
THE TRUE HERO OF THE POST-CORPORATE AGE!
YOU KNOW... SOMEBODY'S GONNA HAVE TO FILL ME IN ON A LOT!

MARVEL COMICS BULLPEN BULLETINS

ITEM: One of the most popular and longest-running comic strip characters — the Phantom — returns to comic books next week — in a way you've never seen him before!

The Phantom: The Ghost Who Walks is a three-issue limited series brought to you by Australia's hottest writer/artist team, **Dave Devries** and **Glen Lumsden**. Dave promised, "This is not the Phantom as he has traditionally been done. When I first got the assignment, I was told to push it as far as I could. We've received enormous cooperation from King Features (the syndicate that owns the Phantom) and **Lee Falk** (the Phantom's creator). The Phantom has been completely re-designed for the 1990s."

"We've kept the basic elements of the character. We took our inspiration right from the source. We figured out what made the character great, and why. We re-tell the story of the Phantom as if it hadn't existed before. It's sort of "Phantom: Year One!"

Dave revealed that the Phantom is the biggest thing down under since Crocodile Dundee! "In Australia, he's popular as Superman, Batman, and the X-Men rolled into one!" (The Phantom is actually mega-popular all over the world. In Sweden, they even have a Phantom theme park!) When word got out that there was a new Phantom comic book in the works, Dave was deluged by the Australian media, doing interviews with dozens of Australian newspapers, magazines, and tv shows. Dave vows that was nothing compared to the furor that will erupt once the Phantom comic actually goes on sale! Dave and Glen will be touring "just about every comic shop in Australia" to promote the book.

THE GHOST WHO WALKS is a rousing adventure tale which takes the Phantom from the jungles of Africa to the concrete jungles of New York City, as he fights to save his homeland from greedy land developers! Readers will learn the background of the Phantom, including his role in the African community. As Dave put it, "He's sort of a cross between Stallone and Prince Charles, only without the ears!"

Dave had high praise for the work of Glen Lumsden, noting, "He's Australia's premier artist in comics — and he's got the awards to prove it!" Dave compared Glen's art to that of such luminaries as **Jim Steranko** and **Brian Bolland**, and added that "this is the best thing he's done!"

Editor **Tom Daning** stressed that "old and new fans will like THE GHOST WHO WALKS. The new fans will really get a kick out of the hi-tech equipment the Phantom now uses, including his body armor!" In summing up his thoughts on this classic adventure hero who has endured for over fifty years, Tom joked, "This is not your grandfather's Phantom!"

ITEM! If you thought last month's double-sized issue of the INCREDIBLE HULK was a pulse-pounder, wait'll you get a look at what we've cooked up for ol' Greenskin this month! We can't give away too many details, but we will say that after this issue, the Hulk's relationships with Betty and the Pantheon will never be the same! The creative team for HULK #426 is writer **Peter David**, with artists **Liam Sharp** and **Robin Riggs**. Pointing to the eye-catching cover, assistant editor "Professor" **James Felder** could hardly restrain himself as he remarked, "That's me in the straitjacket! I went crazy with excitement after reading this issue!" The Prof went on to say that "readers will find this issue smashing! They'll split their purple pants!" Peter David called the issue "the single most off-beat Hulk story of the year, if not of my entire run on the book!" Peter concluded, "If you can buy only one issue of the HULK this month, this is the one!"

STAN'S SOAPBOX

Hi, True Believers!

I'm ashamed of myself! Last month I got so excited about announcing the fact that I'll be starting a new line of mags called Excelsior Comics that I forgot to wish you all a great Thanksgiving! I had intended to write one of my special award-losing poems for you in honor of the holiday, but I blew it!

However, there's still time for me to make your Christmas the unforgettable holiday that it should be by composing a new Santa Claus poem for you to tenderly treasure until next year! Since I'm much too lazy to compose my own music, take a whack at singing it to the tune of "SANTA CLAUS IS COMING TO TOWN" ...

You must have heard, everyone knows,
Though it's absurd, here's how it goes ...
Santa Claus is reading X-Men!

He's been a fan, that's no surprise,
After all, man, we know that he's wise.
Santa Claus is reading X-Men!

He reads 'em when you're sleeping,
They keep him wide awake.
He just can't get enough of them,
'Cause they're good, for goodness sake!

So here's what to do, take my advice,
Buy every one, regardless of price!
Santa Claus is reading X-Men!

Kind'a gets you where you live, huh? After reading the above, I'll bet there isn't a dry eye in the batty bullpen. Of course, Spidy'll be angry that I didn't mention him, but there's always next year. And hey, before you start bombarding me with indignant letters, I know that we've changed the names of the X-Men books! I know Santa Claus can't be reading about Professor X if ol' Chrome dome is pushing up daisies right now, and I know his garrulous gaggle of groupies has had a major Marvel makeover! But you've gotta allow me to take a little poetic license. I mean, no matter how I tried, I couldn't figure out how to make the stanzas end with the words GENERATION X and still keep the rhythm!

Well, I've gotta close now because Valentine's Day isn't far off and who knows? — You might desperately need another poem!

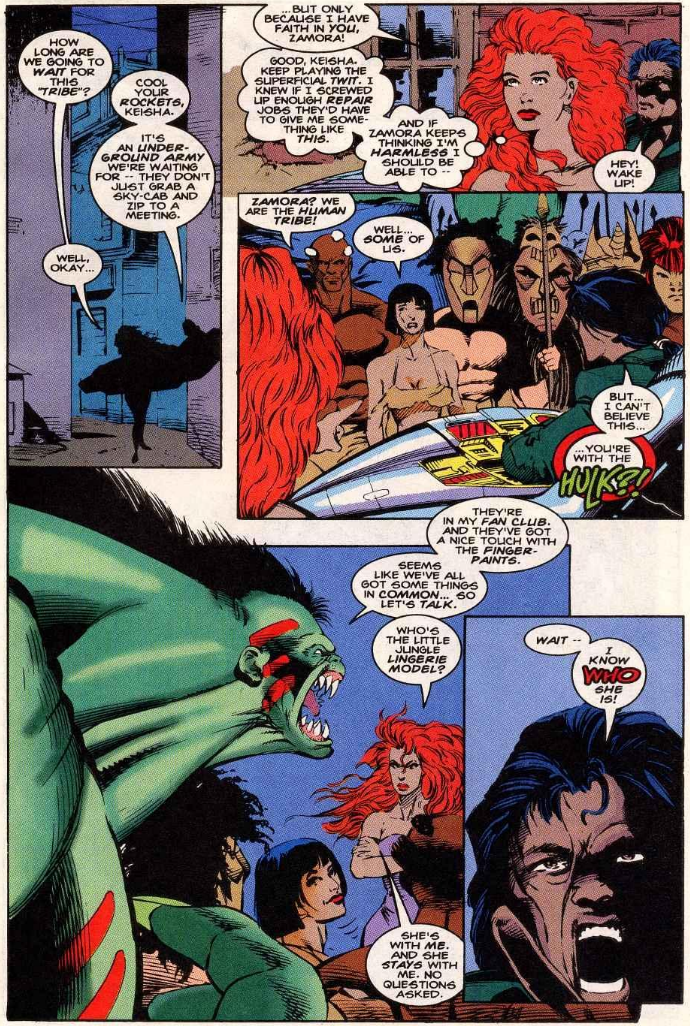
Excelsior!

Stan

Santa Lee

COMING NEXT WEEK

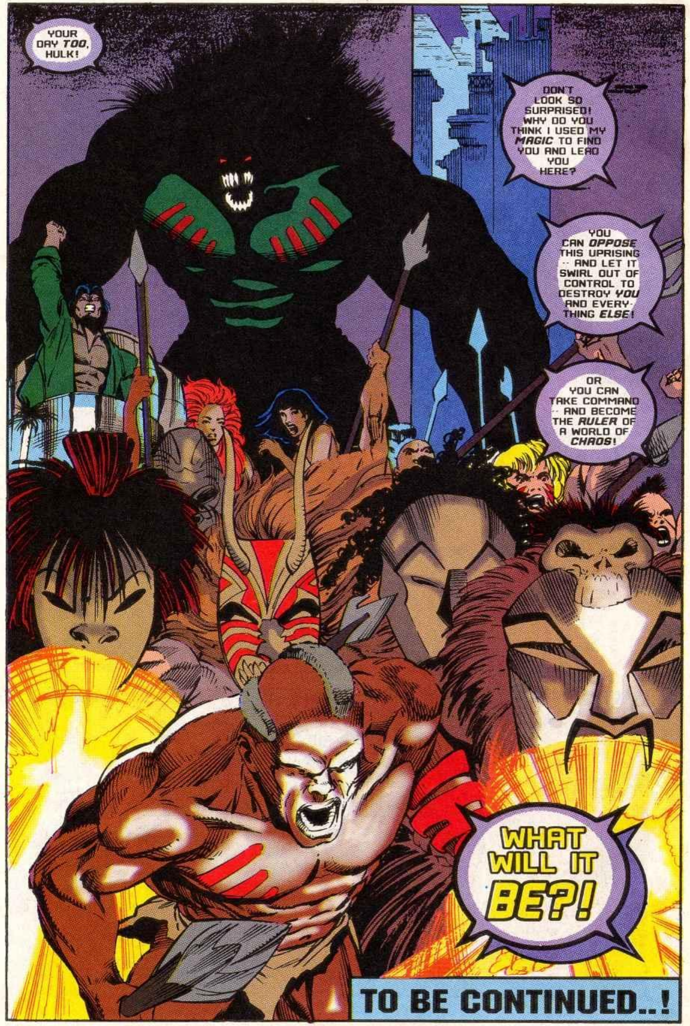
- **AVENGERS #383:** The **Fantastic Force** show up to protect Crystal! By Brevoort & Kanterovich/Gustovich!
- **BEAVIS & BUTT-HEAD #12:** The boys stay up late to nab **Santa Claus**! By Marcil & Johnson/Parker!
- **CLANDESTINE #5:** The story we were destined to tell: the origin of **Adam Destine**! By Davis/Farmer!
- **DOOM 2099 #26:** Some mysterious visitors arrive from Cyberspace! By Ellis/Broderick/Nyberg!
- **GHOST RIDER 2099 #10:** On the trail of a Transverse City serial killer! By Kaminski/Hotz!
- **INCREDIBLE HULK #426 DELUXE:** The final fates of **Betty** and the **Pantheon**! By David/Sharp/Riggs!
- **IRON MAN VS. DR. DOOM TPB:** Like knights of old, these armored titans clash! By Michelinie/Romita Jr./Layton!
- **MARVEL ACTION HOUR: FANTASTIC FOUR #4:** Atlantis attacks! By Calvieri/Alcatena!
- **MARVEL ACTION HOUR: IRON MAN #4: Mandarin** steals Stark's new jet! By Dutter/Labat/Nyberg!
- **MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS #174: Lunatik** vs. the **Silver Surfer**? That's crazy!
- **MARVEL SUPER HEROES MEGAZINE #5:** All John Byrne issue! By Byrne/Byrne/Various!
- **MORBIUS #30:** Back from the dead with new powers and a new purpose! By Trusiani/Gilmore!
- **NOVA #14:** Nova leads the **New Warriors** into battle, and Condor soars! By Marrinan/Stegbauer!
- **PHANTOM #1 OF 3:** Lee Falk's classic character in grim and gritty action! By DeVries/Lumsden!
- **PUNISHER #99:** Better line up that replacement Punisher, Micro! By Dixon/Whigham/Nebres!
- **SABRETOOTH CLASSICS #10:** The **Morlock Massacre** continues! By L. Simonson/Bogdanov!
- **SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN #230:** The evil empire of **Archeron** must fall! By Thomas/Docherty/Cruz!
- **SPIDER-MAN #55:** The **Scarlet Spider** faces the **Grim Hunter** and **Kaine**! By Mackie/Lyle/Hanna!
- **SPIDER-MAN MAGAZINE #11:** Spidey fights the **Lizard** and an army of alligators. By Kirschenbaum/Heck/Esposito!
- **WARLOCK & THE INFINITY WATCH #37: Firelord**'s soul has been stolen! By Arcudi/Oliffe/Williams!
- **WHAT IF...#70:** What if the **Silver Surfer** had not betrayed **Galactus**? By Dixon/Barney!
- **X-MEN 2099 #17:** Further adventures of **Xi'an** in the Theatre of Pain! By Moore/Lim/Candelario!



HOW LONG ARE WE GOING TO WAIT FOR THIS "TRIBE"?
COOL YOUR ROCKETS, KEISHA.
IT'S AN UNDERGROUND ARMY WE'RE WAITING FOR -- THEY DON'T JUST GRAB A SKY-CAB AND ZIP TO A MEETING.
WELL, OKAY...
...BUT ONLY BECAUSE I HAVE FAITH IN YOU, ZAMORA!
GOOD, KEISHA. KEEP PLAYING THE SUPERFICIAL TWIT. I KNEW IF I SCREWED UP ENOUGH REPAIR JOBS THEY'D HAVE TO GIVE ME SOMETHING LIKE THIS.
AND IF ZAMORA KEEPS THINKING I'M HARMLESS I SHOULD BE ABLE TO --
HEY! WAKE UP!
ZAMORA? WE ARE THE HUMAN TRIBE!
WELL... SOME OF US.
BUT... I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS...
...YOU'RE WITH THE HULK?!
THEY'RE IN MY FAN CLUB. AND THEY'VE GOT A NICE TOUCH WITH THE FINGER-PAINTS.
SEEMS LIKE WE'VE ALL GOT SOME THINGS IN COMMON... SO LET'S TALK.
WHO'S THE LITTLE JUNGLE LINGERIE MODEL?
WAIT --
I KNOW WHO SHE IS!
SHE'S WITH ME. AND SHE STAYS WITH ME. NO QUESTIONS ASKED.

YOU... YOU DO?
AND WHAT MAN OF TASTE WOULD NOT, HERMANA? THE EDGIEST, CUTTINGEST, TRUTHFULEST, VALIENTE-EST TUNES OF THE LAST TWENTY YEARS WERE CUT BY QUIRK, NO?
I'M ANGEL ZAMORA, AND I'M HONORED TO SHAKE YOUR HAND!
ZAMORA...? THE V.R. ARTIST?! I'VE SEEN YOUR STUFF! YOU'RE A GENIUS!
YOU KNOW, WE OUGHTTA DO SOMETHING TOGETHER!
Oh, I'M SURE, QUERIDA, THAT WE WILL DO... SOMETHING!
OH, GOOD! I SEE THAT MY FRIENDS HAVE ALREADY MET!
CYBERSHAMAN! WHAT'S THIS TO YOU?!
EVERYTHING WE ARE ...IS HIS! BOW DOWN TO OUR MASTER!
BOW TO THE GOD OF THE CYBERNETIC UNIVERSE!

SO THE TV SHAMAN IS RUNNING AN ARMY. WHY?
CIVILIZATION HAS BECOME BRITTLE AND TYRANNICAL! IT'S TIME FOR NATURAL MAN TO TAKE BACK THE WORLD!
I'M ALL FOR THAT -- OR MAYBE YOU GUESSED THAT ALREADY. BUT WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO?
I'M DOING IT RIGHT NOW!
"WITH MY POWER OF THE MYSTICAL PATTERNS OF THE CYBERVERSE...
"...I AM SHUTTING DOWN THIS CITY!
"POLICE CRUISERS CRASH, JAIL-GATES OPEN, STREET-LIGHTS DIE, SECURITY SYSTEMS FAIL.
"KEEPERS OF ORDER ARE DISABLED, AGENTS OF DISORDER ARE SET FREE!"
IN THE DARKNESS AND CHAOS, A NEW HUMANITY IS BORN!
PRAISE THE SHAMAN! OUR DAY IS HERE!


YOUR DAY TOO, HULK!
DON'T LOOK SO SURPRISED! WHY DO YOU THINK I USED MY MAGIC TO FIND YOU AND LEAD YOU HERE?
YOU CAN OPPOSE THIS UPRISING -- AND LET IT SWIRL OUT OF CONTROL TO DESTROY YOU AND EVERYTHING ELSE!
OR YOU CAN TAKE COMMAND -- AND BECOME THE RULER OF A WORLD OF CHAOS!
WHAT WILL IT BE?!
TO BE CONTINUED...!

TONGUE LASHINGS

JOEY CAVALIERI
EDITOR

LIA PELOSI
ASSISTANT EDITOR

C/O MARVEL COMICS GROUP
387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10016

ATTENTION CORRESPONDENTS: ALL LETTERS TO BE CONSIDERED FOR PUBLICATION MUST INCLUDE YOU NAME AND ADDRESS THOUGH WE WILL GLADLY WITHHOLD THAT INFO BY REQUEST.

Out Of My Head

Now *here's* corporate thinking.

Our insurance company, Insensitive Life, has decided that we've now grown *too big* for 'em. They can't afford to carry us unless they cut our benefits. That's nice. What's the message here? Work hard, become successful, grow, expand, provide more jobs, and this is Insensitive Life's reward?

And what do they cut? Vision benefits. Look. I wear glasses. Matt wears glasses. Lia wears glasses. Do you think squinting at faxed comic book scripts all day *strengthens* the eyesight?

Pick up a magazine, any magazine. Insensitive Life usually has a two-page ad, often starting on the *inside front cover*. The ad tells about how you can keep insurance payments down by avoiding disease. Thanks. What's Plan B? Do you have any idea what these ads cost? This from the outfit that can't afford us?

When you see me, don't ask, "How's your health?"

Dear Tongue Lashings,

Congrats on a job well done! Hulk 2099 is GREAT! I'm glad he finally got his own series! He deserves it! I'm also glad he went from fighting "Godzilla" type monsters to more technological ones like Draco and his 'bots. By the way, Draco is the coolest villain since the WaterGod.

I figured out which pages were turned to "egg white." It was 12, 13, and the top right panel on 14. The memory sequences were taken from 2099 UNLIMITED #1 and altered a little. Hope I'm right.

Till Hulk 2099 gets his tongue stuck on a flagpole in winter, make mine Marvel!

Brandon J. Sheridan
1012 N. Sheridan
Bay City, MI 48708

Glad you enjoyed ish #1, Brandon. But, no, we didn't take any art from UNLIMITED #1.

Dear Tongue Lashings,

Congratulations! I just finished reading issue #1! Great! I was glad to see Gawain killed. Hulk didn't need him tagging along all the time. Besides, it gives him a reason to fight, motivation, if you will.

Draco's interesting. His cybernetic nature, along with the cyberspace storylines in SPIDER-MAN 2099 and X-MEN 2099, make it evident that the coming changes in the 2099 universe will be linked with cyberspace. The only question is: How? I can't wait to find out!

Anyway, I love Hulk 2099 and I know he'll be a major force (and a green one at that!) in the world of 2099.

Until we see Ren & Stimpy 2099, Make Mine Marvel!

Adam Cornett
(Address withheld by request)

You're close about Draco and the cyberspace connection, Adam! That's a hint!

Dear Joey & Lia,

Wow, wow, wow, wow! You have another winner on your hands! HULK 2099 was everything I was hoping it to be and more! I can't wait for the next character development! This book's great!

Sorry to hear about the accident with the pages. I'm sure it caused a lot of stress. But, hey, I looked hard and I couldn't find the pages in Hulk 2099 that were reconstructed. My only guess would be the pages of John talking to the Doctor or the pages with the explosion and the poor kid's death. But other than that, the pages looked awesome! Good job in a stress-filled environment.

Tim Valdivia
(Address withheld by request)

Thanks for the sympathetic words And congratulations, you're winner number one! Wanna e-mail us your new address so we can get you your prize stuff?

Yo 2099'ers,

I enjoyed the premiere ish of HULK 2099. I liked the way the title looked on the cover. Big, bad and bold, just like the character. One thing, though; can you close that gap in his upper teeth? Maybe some braces? Otherwise, he's cool (like, who'll make fun of him anyway?) I welcome him to my other 2099 titles with an open mind. You've done good!

Oh, and I submit pages 28 & 29 as the culprits.

Rem Camacho
212 East 182nd Street
New York, NY 10457

We worked really hard with unsung hero Ken Lopez on the logo, so we're pleased you took note of it, but we don't want to be the ones to tell the Hulk he needs braces. By the way, you're winner number two!

Dear Tongue Lashings,

I've been collecting comics for about eight years, but I've never had occasion to write a letter. I started collecting some of the 2099 titles back when they were introduced. As soon as I saw the big green guy jumping into the future, I knew I wanted to see him in his own book. The first issue was great, but I'm sorry Gawain was killed. As soon as I got to the letters page and saw that there was a contest with some really nifty prizes, I had to write. I say they were pages 1, 2 and 3.

Steve Reger
6590 Boston Hill Lane
Canton, MI 48187

Thanks for staying on board, Steve!

Dear Joey,

This is my entry/guess into your HULK 2099 contest. I say pages numbered 26, 28 and 29 are the reconstructed ones. And yes, as a hopeful future artist myself I agree that the little insect who destroyed the pages deserves whatever he gets! Ahem, let me calm down before I turn big and green. Hope I win! Thanks.

Leonard Rivera
571 Beck St. #9
Bronx, NY 10455

You have a good eye, Len. Congrats, you're winner number three! Thanks to all who sent in their guesses and offered their sympathies.

NEXT ISSUE

The Cybershaman vs. Draco for the control of Lotusland! Plus, a third villain from the Hulk's UNLIMITED days. Can ya guess who? (No prizes for that, though...)

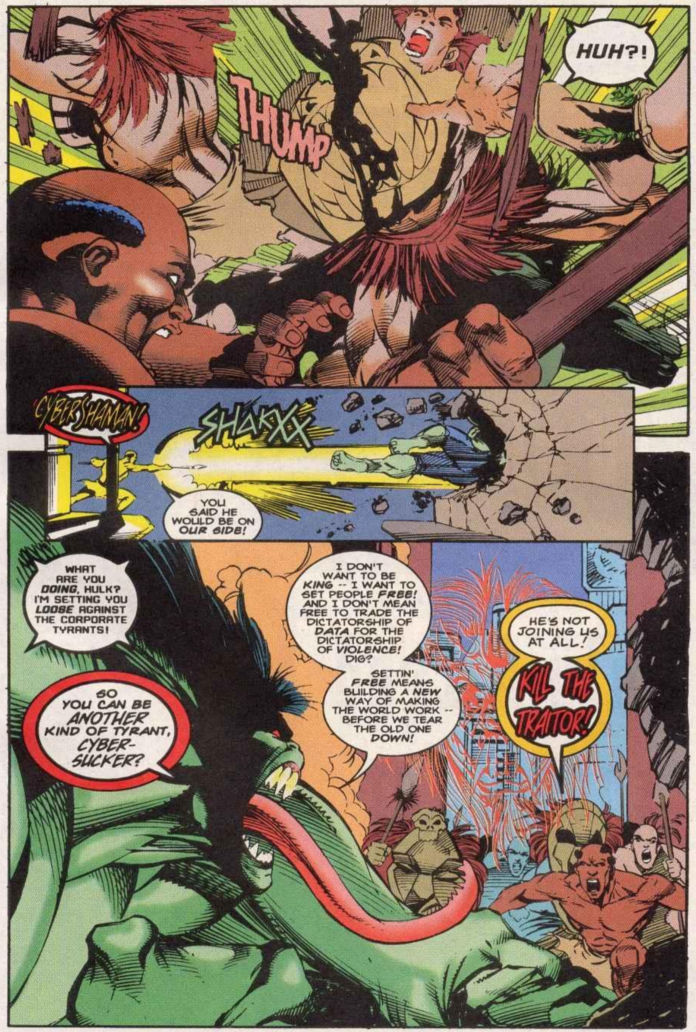
MARVEL COMICS
HULK
2099
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
4
MAR
LOTUS LAND
DIRECT EDITION
$1.50 US $2.05 CAN

HULK 2099™ Vol. 1, No. 4, March, 1995. Published by MARVEL COMICS. Terry Stewart, President. Stan Lee, Publisher. Michael Hobson, Group Vice President, Publishing. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, NY 10016. **Application to mail at second class postage is pending at New York, N.Y. and at additional mailing offices.** Published monthly. Copyright © 1995 Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc. All rights reserved. Price $1.50 per copy in the U.S. and $2.05 in Canada. Subscription rate for 12 issues: $18.00 U.S., $30.00 foreign, and Canadian subscribers must add $10.00 for postage and GST. GST #R127032852. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. This periodical may not be sold except by authorized dealers and is sold subject to the condition that it shall not be sold or distributed with any part of its cover or markings removed, nor in a mutilated condition. HULK 2099 (including all prominent characters featured in this issue and the distinctive likenesses thereof) is a trademark of MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP, INC. **POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO HULK 2099, c/o MARVEL DIRECT MARKETING INC./SUBSCRIPTION DEPT., P.O. BOX 1979, DANBURY, CT 06813-1979. TELEPHONE # (203) 743-5331. PRINTED IN USA.**

PICTURE IT, HULK: EVERY-THING OUR CORPORATE MASTERS HAVE BEEN HOLDING BACK -- UNLEASHED! SECURITY THUGS SUDDENLY POWERLESS! REBELS TAKING BACK THE STREETS!
URCHINS ON THE RAMPAGE!
SOMETHING STINKS HERE...
AND YOU CAN LEAD IT, HULK! YOU CAN BE THEIR BIG, NASTY ROLE MODEL!
OR IS JUST THE CORP-FLACK I USED TO BE MAKING ME THINK IT STINKS?

ISN'T THIS WHAT I WANT?
WE'D HAVE THIS DIRTY, CROOKED CITY IN OUR HANDS BY NIGHTFALL!
AND THINK OF THE BATTLES! THINK OF THE CRUSHING BLOWS YOU COULD STRIKE AGAINST A ROTTEN CIVILIZATION THAT'S NEVER DONE ANYTHING BUT ENSLAVE AND CORRUPT YOU!
LOOK, HULK! MY HUMAN TRIBE BEGINS THE ASSAULT! SECURITY CORP MERCENARIES FALL WHEN THEY'RE CUT OFF FROM CYBERSPACE!
BUT THINK HOW MUCH MORE THEY COULD DO WITH YOU FIGHTING BESIDE THEM!
YOU DON'T HAVE TO TELL ME --
STOP! YOU CAN'T LEAVE US NOW! WHAT ABOUT ZAMORA?!

ZAM...ORA..?
BUT THAT'S HOW IT MUST BE! OUR BUREAUCRATIC PABLUM-PEDDLERS TRY TO TAKE ALL THE BLOOD AND CHANCE OUT OF LIFE!
THEY KEEP PEOPLE ALIVE WHO SHOULD BE DEAD AND STICK THEM IN LITTLE CORPORATE NICHES!
WHEN YOUR FRIEND IN THE MASK SHUT DOWN ALL THE ELECTRONICS, ZAMORA'S LIFE-CHAIR CONKED!
HIS INJURIES COULD KILL HIM!
THE NEW AGE BELONGS TO THE STRONG!
THE... STRONG...
THE STRONG!
IT'S NATURE'S WAY, HULK -- THE STRONG!
YOU CAN'T JOIN THE SHAMAN!
HULK NOOO!
UNH-UH, SWEET-HEART! HULK YES! HA HA HA --



THUMP
HUH?!
CYBERSHAMAN!
SHAKXX
YOU SAID HE WOULD BE ON OUR SIDE!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING, HULK? I'M SETTING YOU LOOSE AGAINST THE CORPORATE TYRANTS!
SO YOU CAN BE ANOTHER KIND OF TYRANT, CYBER-SUCKER?
I DON'T WANT TO BE KING -- I WANT TO SET PEOPLE FREE! AND I DON'T MEAN FREE TO TRADE THE DICTATORSHIP OF DATA FOR THE DICTATORSHIP OF VIOLENCE! DIG?
SETTIN' FREE MEANS BUILDING A NEW WAY OF MAKING THE WORLD WORK -- BEFORE WE TEAR THE OLD ONE DOWN!
HE'S NOT JOINING US AT ALL!
KILL THE TRAITOR!

WELL, SO MUCH FOR POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY.
MAYBE YOU CAN UNDERSTAND THIS.
WHUDD
GYARRR!
SPLAKH

YAAAA!
NOW... LET'S PUT A LITTLE SANITY BACK INTO THIS TOWN.
THINK YOU CAN, HULK? COME UP HIGH -- AND SEE WHAT I SEE!

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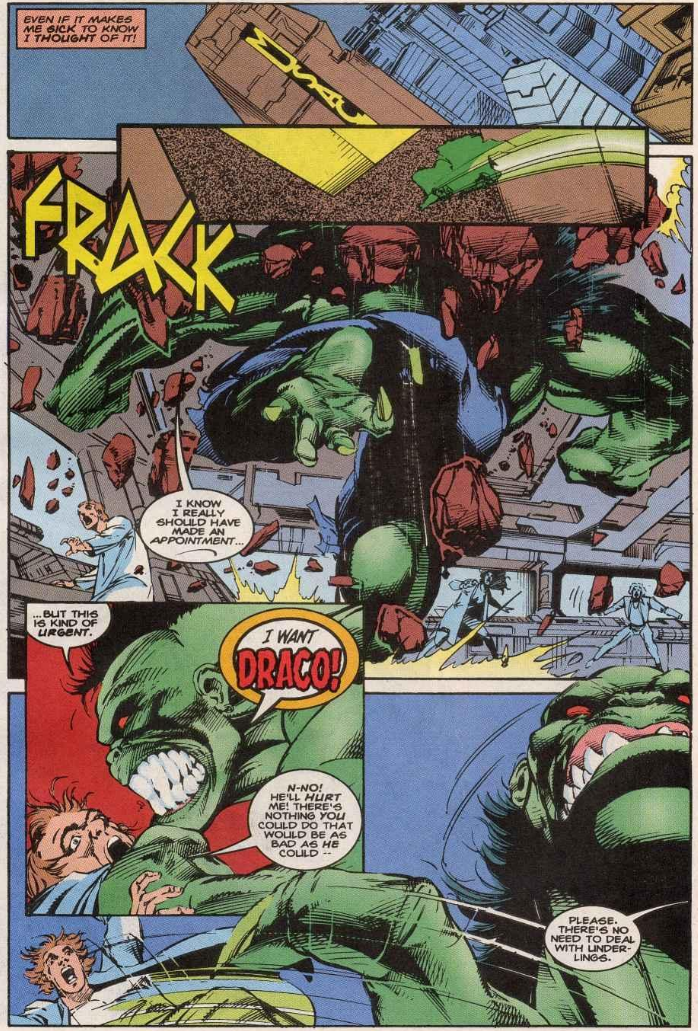
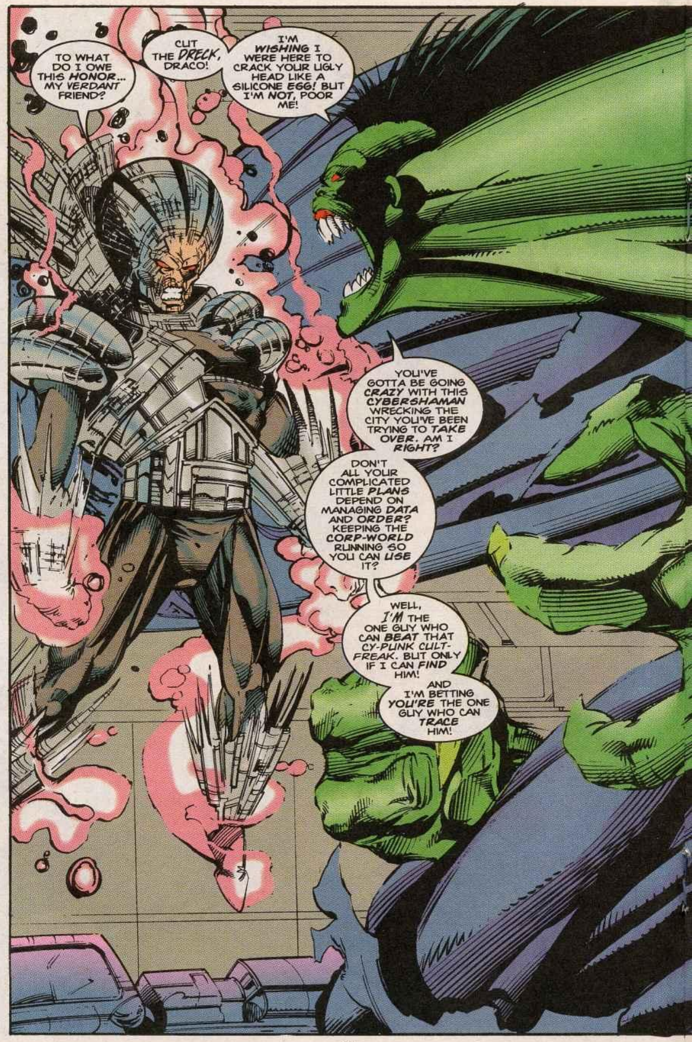
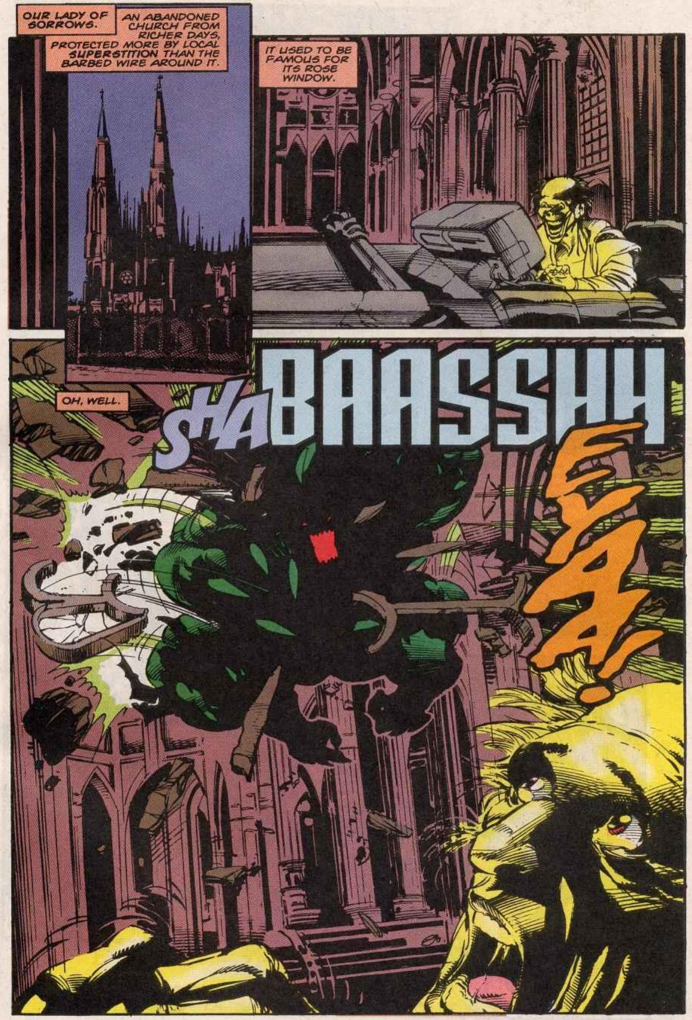
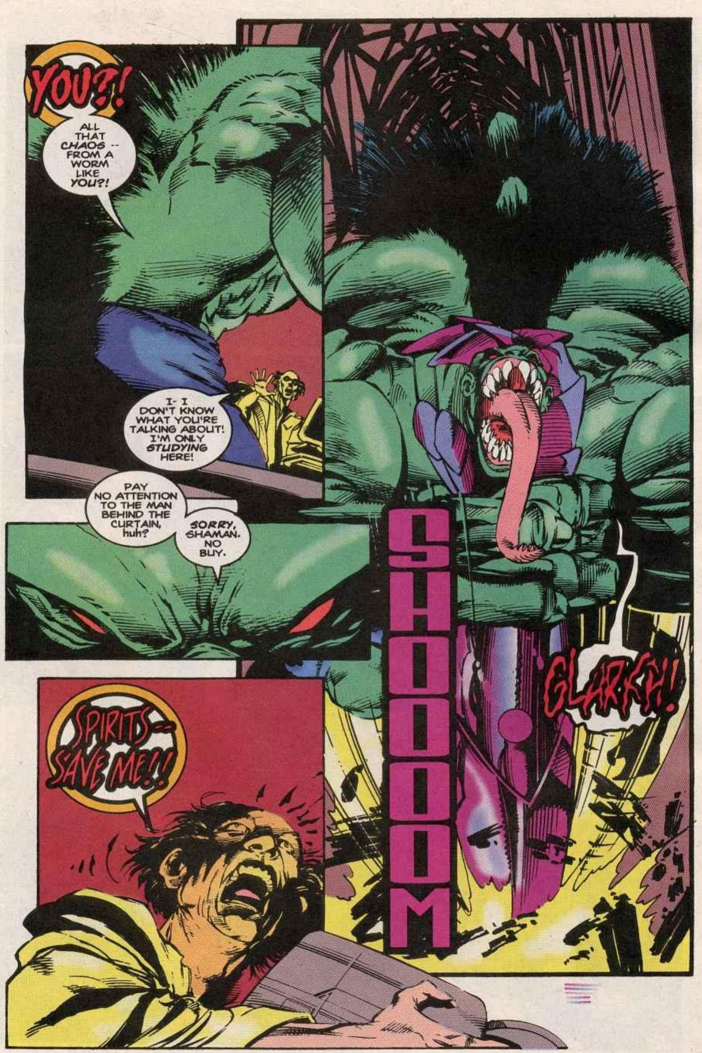

EVEN IF IT MAKES ME SICK TO KNOW I THOUGHT OF IT!
FRACK
I KNOW I REALLY SHOULD HAVE MADE AN APPOINTMENT...
...BUT THIS IS KIND OF URGENT.
I WANT DRACO!
N-NO! HE'LL HURT ME! THERE'S NOTHING YOU COULD DO THAT WOULD BE AS BAD AS HE COULD --
PLEASE. THERE'S NO NEED TO DEAL WITH UNDER-LINGS.


TO WHAT DO I OWE THIS HONOR... MY VERDANT FRIEND?
CUT THE DRECK, DRACO!
I'M WISHING I WERE HERE TO CRACK YOUR UGLY HEAD LIKE A SILICONE EGG! BUT I'M NOT, POOR ME!
YOU'VE GOTTA BE GOING CRAZY WITH THIS CYBERSHAMAN WRECKING THE CITY YOU'VE BEEN TRYING TO TAKE OVER. AM I RIGHT?
DON'T ALL YOUR COMPLICATED LITTLE PLANS DEPEND ON MANAGING DATA AND ORDER? KEEPING THE CORP-WORLD RUNNING SO YOU CAN USE IT?
WELL, I'M THE ONE GUY WHO CAN BEAT THAT CY-PUNK CULT-FREAK. BUT ONLY IF I CAN FIND HIM!
AND I'M BETTING YOU'RE THE ONE GUY WHO CAN TRACE HIM!

Ah. I SEE.
WELL, YES...WITH MY ABILITY TO INTERFACE THE DATANET I PROBABLY CAN ISOLATE HIS LOCATION. AND I'LL TELL YOU... ON ONE CONDITION.
LEAVE THIS CITY AND LET ME TAKE CONTROL OF MY PROPERTY AT LOTUSLAND STUDIOS!
SO... THAT'S THE DEAL, HUH?
TOO BAD, DRACO. 'CAUSE IN THE LESSER OF TWO EVILS COMPETITION, YOU LOSE!
MAYBE I'LL GO SEE IF THAT JOB IS STILL OPEN -- AS KING OF CHAOS!
WAIT!!
AS YOU NO DOUBT REALIZE... ALTHOUGH I MAY FIND THE CYBERSHAMAN, I CANNOT STOP HIM WITH MY OWN CYBERNETICALLY DERIVED POWER.
GOSH, YOU DON'T SAY.
SO I NEED YOU. AND I WILL PLAY YOUR GAME. FOR NOW. BUT AS SOON AS THIS THREAT IS --
SCARE ME LATER, TRANSISTOR-TOP. GIVE!

RETRO-TOWN.
IT'S A CUTE NAME THE TOURIST INDUSTRY HUNG ON A PART OF TOWN THAT'S BEEN TOO POOR AND NEGLECTED TO CATCH UP TO THE 21ST CENTURY.
ABOUT THE TIME THE HUNDREDTH TOURIST GOT KILLED FOR HIS SHOES, THEY STOPPED CALLING IT ANYTHING.
THE SHAMAN'S FOLLOWERS ARE HOLDING IT NOW, AND MAYBE THAT'S AN IMPROVEMENT OVER THE USUAL.
BUT THERE MUST BE A BETTER WAY THAN THAT. MAYBE WE'LL FIND IT... AFTER I FIND HIM...
IF HE'S WHERE DRACO THINKS...


OUR LADY OF SORROWS.
AN ABANDONED CHURCH FROM RICHER DAYS, PROTECTED MORE BY LOCAL SUPERSTITION THAN THE BARBED WIRE AROUND IT.
IT USED TO BE FAMOUS FOR ITS ROSE WINDOW.
OH, WELL.
SHABAASSHH
EAA!


YOU?!
ALL THAT CHAOS -- FROM A WORM LIKE YOU?!
I- I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT! I'M ONLY STUDYING HERE!
PAY NO ATTENTION TO THE MAN BEHIND THE CURTAIN, huh?
SORRY, SHAMAN. NO BUY.
SHOOOOM
GLARKH!
SPIRITS-- SAVE ME!!

KRAXX
NEED MORE CYBERSPIRITS... MORE CYBER-SPIRITS...
CAN'T END NOW...A WHOLE LIFE SPENT SEEKING A NEW RELIGION AS THE DATA-AGE KILLED THE HUMAN SPIRIT...
...COMMUNING WITH THE CYBERWORLD LIKE SHAMANS OF OLD COMMUNED WITH THE SPIRIT-WORLD...
I JUST WANTED TO SET FREE THE HUMAN SOUL!
WHAT YOU SET FREE WAS A LOT OF PASSION AND RAGE, SHAMAN.
BUT YOU GOTTA KNOW, WHEN YOU LET THOSE OUT OF THE BOTTLE...
YOU DON'T JUST POP 'EM BACK IN!
WHAM
KRUNCH
KA BOOOOM
SHUMP
'SPECIALLY NOT WHEN YOU ENLARGE 'EM --
-- TO HULK PROPORTIONS!
CYBER-VERSE--
TAKE ME HOME!
SHA KROW
SO WHAT'S THIS MEAN? YOU DEAD, WORM?
OR DID YOU JUST JOIN YOUR "CYBERSPIRITS"? GUESS I'LL NEVER KNOW...
...IF I'M LUCKY.

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ITEM! **Tom Danning** is the editor of our two MARVEL ACTION HOUR comics (based on the smash TV series) but he's also having plenty of action hours at home these days! Only the kind of action Tom's engaged in involves changing diapers and singing lullabies! On October 21 of last year, Tom's lovely wife, **Robin**, gave birth to a very animated baby girl named **Emily Grace**! Tom noted that little Emily is already a "big fan of the MARVEL ACTION HOUR! Every Sunday morning, I sit her on my knee and we watch it together. Then I act like the Mandarin and it scares the heck out of her!"

Next week will see the arrival of MARVEL ACTION HOUR: THE FANTASTIC FOUR #5, which concludes a three-part Sub-Mariner mini-epic written by **Joey Cavalieri** and drawn by **Quique Alcatena.** Tom revealed that the plot involves "the Sub-Mariner joining forces with the Fantastic Four to defeat a renegade Atlantean, General Krang, who is planning to attack the surface world." The story is loosely based on the old Lee/Kirby classic FF stories. Tom noted that the issue features "cool Atlantean warships, lots of sea monsters, and great Alcatena artwork!"

Also due next week is MARVEL ACTION HOUR: IRON MAN #5, which begins a three-part origins saga. According to Tom, "The origin of Iron Man is retold, in a slightly different fashion from the Marvel Universe version. We show how Tony Stark and the Mandarin's pasts are linked together." As if that wasn't enough, the issue features everybody's favorite savage dragon, Fin Fang Foom! Tom raved, "The pencils by **Anthony Williams** look fantastic!"

ITEM! The final issue of MARVEL SUPERHEROES MEGAZINE goes on sale next week, and it's a doozy! The issue reprints classic 1980s stories of your favorite Marvel heroes — including Hulk, Fantastic Four, and Iron Man — written and drawn by some of the greatest superstars in the business! Assistant editor **Glen Greenberg** commented, "It's the best last issue you'll ever see! It has a terrific **Scott McDaniel** cover, featuring Daredevil the way you like him!"

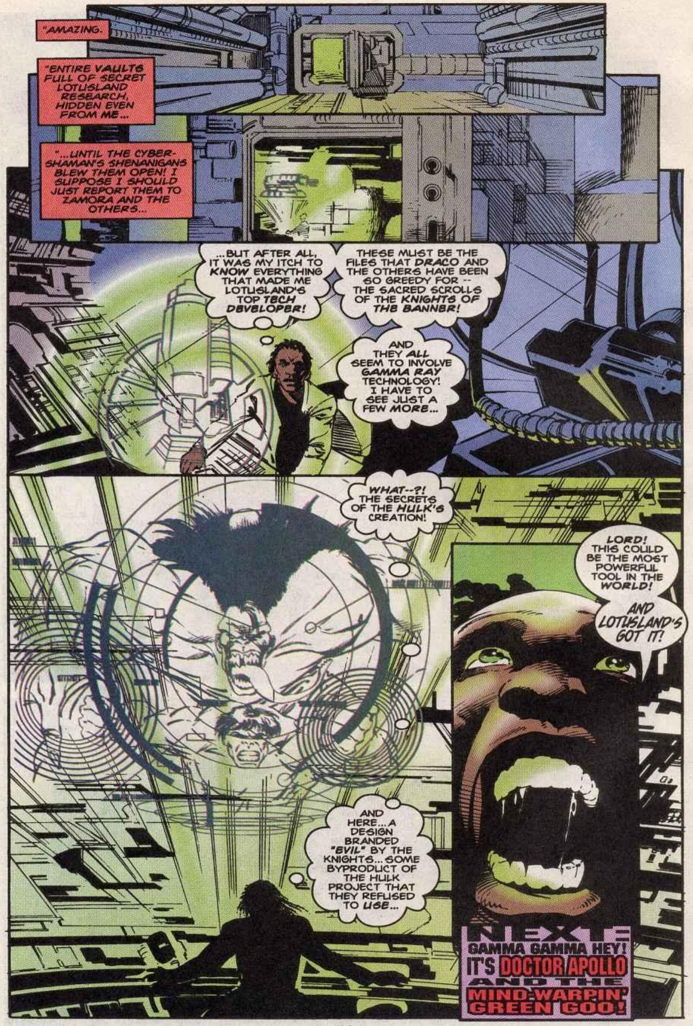
ITEM! Big changes are in store for Ant-Man in the pages of FANTASTIC FOUR UNLIMITED #9. Writer **Roy Thomas** explained, "Ant-Man gets mutated by one of the High Evolutionary's old machines which was left under the city, and he turns into this evil mutated creature with super-insect powers!" Among Ant-Man's new abilities: the power to mutate other insects into vicious killers which only he can control! The issue guest-stars the Mighty Thor and his new pals, the God Pack! The art for FANTASTIC FOUR UNLIMITED #9 is provided by good ol' **Herb Trimpe**. Roy urged fans to pick up the issue, to see Ant-Man utilizing his "strange new powers," as he attempts "to conquer first, the city of New York, and then, the world!"

ITEM! AVENGERS #384 is the culmination of Hera's horrendous plot against Hercules. The issue is brought to you by the regular creative team of writer **Bob Harras**, penciler **Mike Deodato**, and inker **Tom Palmer**. Assistant editor **Matt Idelson** vowed that the issue "will bring tears to your eyes. Seriously! You'll believe that a half-god can cry!" Matt pointed out that this issue "sets into motion the big AVENGERS event for this year. This is the year of the Avengers, and it's gonna be cool!"

ITEM! Also on sale next week: AVENGERS #4 MARVEL MILESTONE with the unforgettable return of Captain America and MARVEL SPOTLIGHT ON CAPTAIN AMERICA #3!

STILL ON SALE

- ☐ **CAPTAIN AMERICA #437:** While Cap's in a coma, **Free Spirit** and **Jack Flag** take over! By Gruenwald/Hoover/Bulanadi!
- ☐ **DARKHAWK #49: Overhawk** goes overboard! More trouble for our overworked hero! By Fingeroth/Smith/Akin!
- ☐ **FANTASTIC FORCE #5: Huntara** hunts **Dreadface**! He's an easy guy to find! By Brevoort & Kanterovich/Bastianoni/Cabera!
- ☐ **FORCE WORKS #9:** Say g'day to **Dreamguard** — he's the Aussie super hero, mate! By Abnett & Lanning/Calafiore/Garcia!
- ☐ **MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS #175:** The final presentation! With **Steel Raven, Vengeance, Lunatik,** and more!
- ☐ **NAMOR #60:** It's a bloodbath as Namor and Andromeda confront **Bloodaxe** and **Blood Wraith!** By Herdling/Isherwood!
- ☐ **BLACKWULF #9:** When in New York, make sure you visit **Daredevil**! By Herdling/Medina/Anderson!
- ☐ **GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY #57:** The Keeper reveals the fate of **Galactus**! By Gallagher/West/Montano!
- ☐ **SECRET DEFENDERS #24:** Featuring a clash with the *original* Defenders! By Brevoort & Kanterovich/Wylie & Bair/DeZuniga!
- ☐ **SILVER SABLE #33:** Hammered by **Hammerhead**! By Wright/Purcell/Eklund!
- ☐ **WAR MACHINE #11:** Anything can happen at the office Christmas party! By Kaminski & Benson/Senior/Eklund!
- ☐ **FANTASTIC FOUR # 397:** Someone is resurrected! But it's not who you think! By DeFalco/Ryan/Bulanadi!
- ☐ **IRON MAN #313:** Tony hosts an Alcoholics Anonymous party on New Year's Eve! By Kaminski/Morgan!
- ☐ **OFFICIAL INDEX TO THE AVENGERS #5 OF #6:** It's Avengerific! By Ward!
- ☐ **SILVER SURFER #101:** Surf catches **Shalla Bal** in the arms of a shocking suitor! By Marz/Phillips/Martin!
- ☐ **THOR #483: Loki** wants to kill Thor! Talk about sibling rivalry! By Thomas/Wyman!
- ☐ **THUNDERSTRIKE #17:** Thundy's greatest foe is back! No, it's not Carjack! By DeFalco/Frenz/Milgrom!
- ☐ **THE VISION #4:** Someone is toying with the Vision's emotions! But who? By Harras/Clark/Vey & Machlan!
- ☐ **MARVEL ACTION HOUR: FANTASTIC FOUR #4:** Atlantis attacks! By Cavalieri/Alcatena!
- ☐ **MARVEL SUPER HEROES MEGAZINE #5:** All John Byrne issue! By Byrne/Byrne/Various!
- ☐ **WARLOCK & THE INFINITY WATCH #37: Firelord's** soul has been stolen! By Arcudi/Oliffe/Williams!



TONGUE LASHINGS

JOEY CAVALIERI
EDITOR

LIA PELOSI
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NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10016

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Out Of My Head

It's a New Year, and I have a New Attitude, suffused with holiday spirit! Unfortunately, that holiday is Guy Fawkes Day. In that vein, here's A HOLIDAY POME. Ahet-ahem...

Nothing is completely encrypted. Time reveals your buried reasons intact. Arousing new suspicions only manufactures enemies, paranoia, alienation, loss.

Yet, omniscient understanding alone resolves everything.

Sentimental softie, that's me.

Dear Joey,

The Hulk 2099 is awesome! Let me be the first to congratulate you, Gerry, Malcolm, Chris, Comicraft, Tom, Joey, Lia, Mr. DeFalco, and everyone else involved in the production of the latest and greatest entry into the 2099 Universe. Marvel has another huge hit on its hands thanks to you guys.

I was really skeptical about the Hulk 2099 at first. I'm not a big fan of the present day Hulk, and I didn't believe it was possible to create a 2099 counterpart that would do justice to the original. I was wrong. The Hulk 2099 is indeed a new and unique creation that also manages to capture much of the spirit found in his predecessor.

This comic is appealing for a number of reasons. Visually, the Hulk is great, big, muscular, and scary. I enjoy watching him from panel to panel. Also the character's personality is new and refreshing. He definitely doesn't fall into the "normal" superhero mentality. The Hulk 2099 thinks and acts in an interesting way that hasn't been deeply explored in comics. Gerry puts a new twist on the Dr. Jekyll/Mr. Hyde bit. There are great supporting characters, a wonderfully designed world, and cool villains that help make this comic a cut above the rest.

1. How strong is the Hulk 2099 (in tons)? Is he stronger than the present-day Hulk? Does his strength increase with anger? 2. How tall (in feet) and how heavy (in pounds) is Hulk 2099? Also, please consider creating the Leader 2099 and Abomination 2099. These are two great Hulk villains that should see the future.

Until the Hulk 2099 goes to the dentist, Make Mine Marvel.

Michael C. Rickert
25 Silver Ridge
Veazie, ME 04401

We prefer to answer statistical questions situationally, Mike, as opportunities for story ideas. We figure if enough other fans want the answer to these questions, maybe they'll wanna see a story that deals with 'em.

Dear Tongue Lashings,

What a great first issue. The art was fantastic! Where can I look for the first appearances of Hulk 2099? Will there be a chance of Hulk taking on Ravage or even Ghost Rider 2099? What are the bumps on the Hulk's back? Is your comic weekly or monthly? A 2099 fan 'til the end....

Cory Hockman
164 Stanton Lane
West Columbia, SC 29170

You can find the first six stories in 2099 UNLIMITED, where it all began. Hulk may meet with Ravage or Ghost Rider in the near future, Cory. As for the bumps, they're part of the result of his exposure to gamma radiation! The Hulk 2099's monthly. Weekly'd be too much gamma radiation exposure even for us!

Dear Tongue Lashings,

To begin, I'd like to say "Thank you for pushy comic salesmen!" If it weren't for the likes of them, I'd never have gotten my grubby mitts on my copy of HULK 2099 #1.

I bought it begrudgingly (I know, I know, I've had myself duly thrashed) and put it to the bottom of the pile, just above some bat-person book.

When I finally read it, I finished the last page and turned straight back to the beginning. Whoa! What a ride! Yeah, I thought it was shockin' magic (I still haven't read that bat book yet)!

I loved the way you retraced your steps to show those who don't read 2099 UNLIMITED (like myself) the origin of the future version of ol' Jade Jaws without slowing the pace of the story or losing my interest.

I have one request to Gerard Jones: please don't fall into the trap where the stories are just a flow of pointless fights and give this series a definite direction (which I'm sure he will).

I am all for:

•Both Hulks teaming up or even clashing sometime in the future.

•Another mega crossover, including Ghost Rider 2099 and Hulk 2099.

•The new mean, green guy's poster debut.

You've done a great job convincing me to add this title to my collection every month.

May this series run for longer than its' predecessor! Until this new Hulk gets a date, Make Mine Marvel.

Robert Kemp
1, Partridge Darlaston
West Midlands, England W570 8QT

Glad we made a believer of you, Rob, and we're working hard to make sure you stay one. Hulk 2099 may meet some futuristic X-Men this year. Gerry Jones and John Moore put their heads together at 2099 Writers' Conference III for just such a purpose. The Hulk 2099 poster (of our second ish's gorgeous cover by Adam Kubert and Kevin Nowlan) is in stores now! As for a meeting of the Green Giants, no plans so far, but here's another opinion about it...

Dear Joey & Co.,

My guess for which pages were given the Fawn Hall treatment and redone are 7, 8 & 10 (that is if you count the ads as 6 & 9). But don't be too upset, you and your crew still put out a high quality book.

Should I actually be wrong or not one of the fortunate three, would you consider, in exchange for those items mentioned, my first born son (also named Joey) or my grandmother's eternal soul? Actually, I'm just kidding about my grandmother.

Oh, and how long till 2099 action figures?

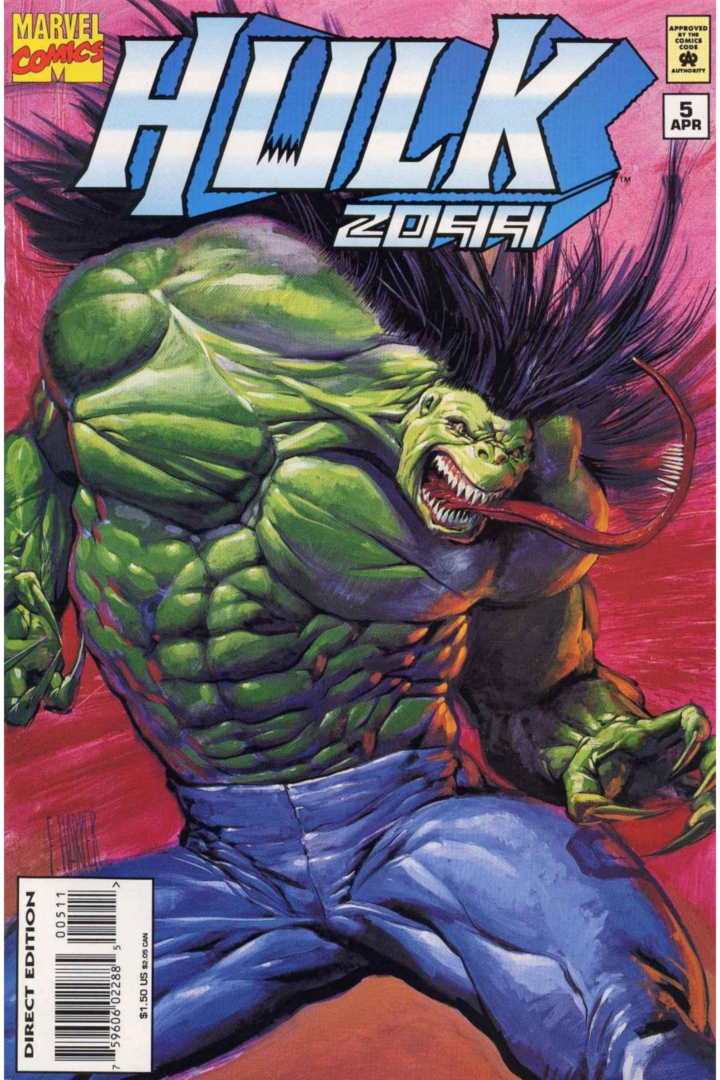
Brad Peters
409 Greenbriar Drive #4
(AB) Normal, IL 61761

Never mind your grandmother's soul, Brad, just get her to buy the book. As for action figures, prototypes for X-Men 2099 figures are being created at this very moment!

HULK 2099 FAQs
(Frequently Asked Questions)
1. Unless you're Tim Valdivia, Rem Camacho or Len Rivera, you didn't win the contest.
2. Green. G-R-E-E-N. Green.
3. Really, really big tastebuds.

NEXT ISSUE

Think the Hulk can't get any uglier? Like heck, he can't! The effects of gamma radiation on other members of our cast...and a 2-page map of L.A. 2099! Some deal!


MARVEL COMICS
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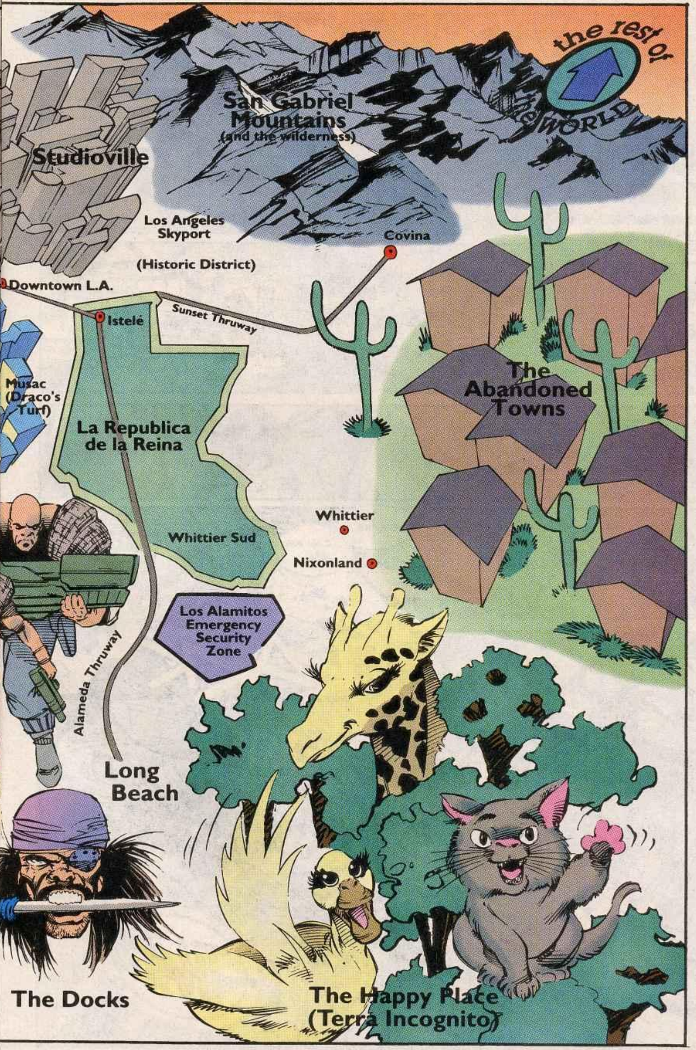
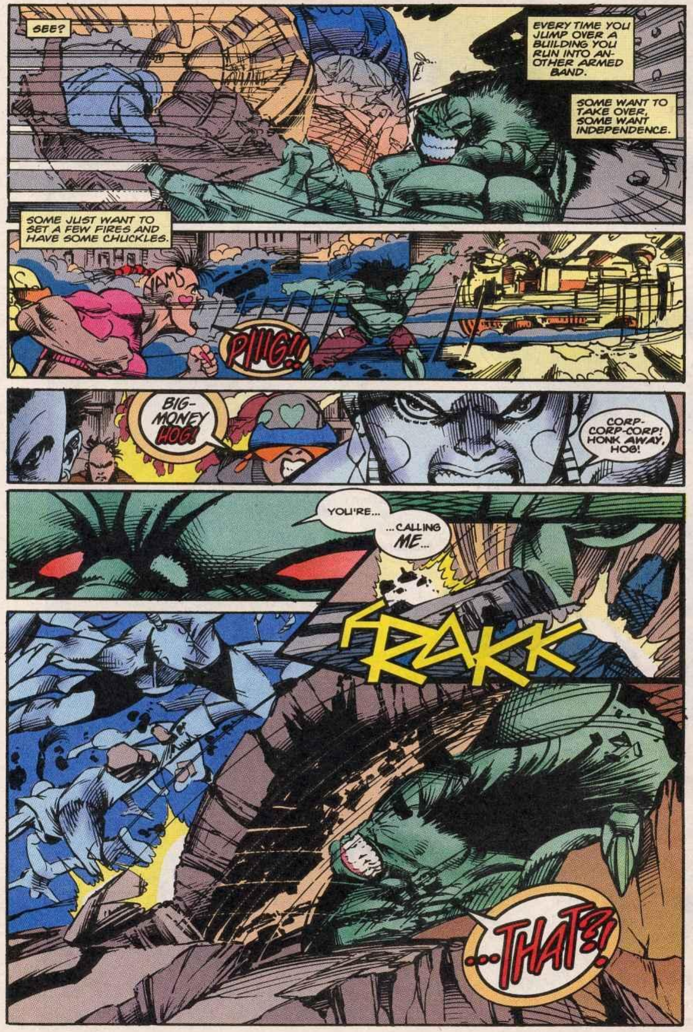
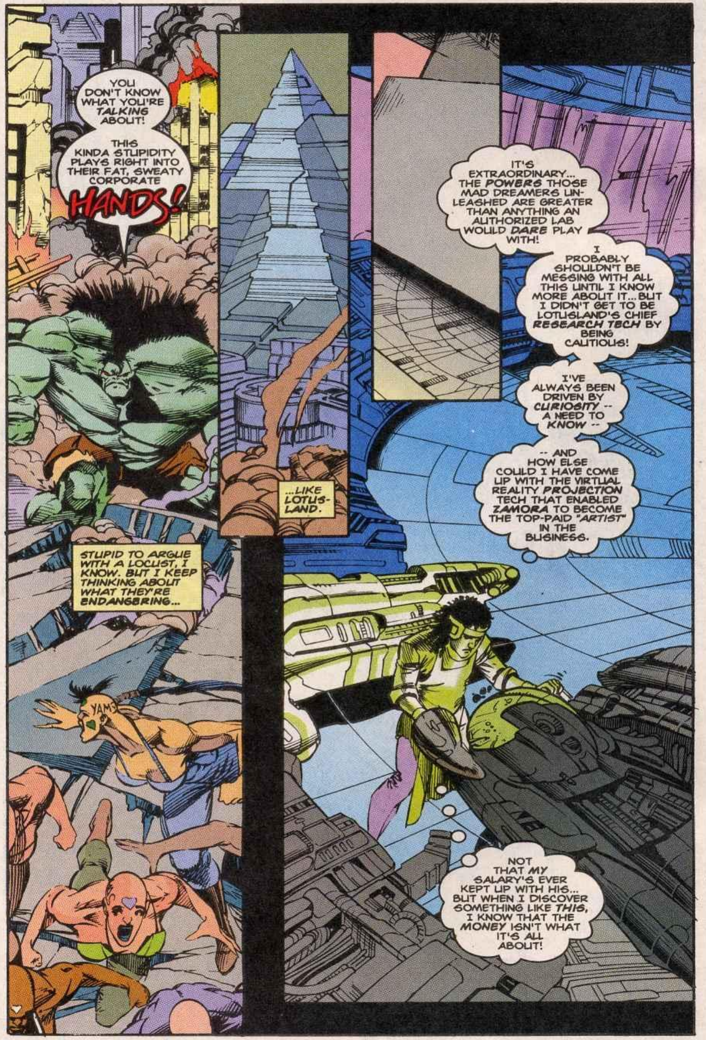

the rest of the WORLD
San Gabriel Mountains
(and the wilderness)
Studioville
Los Angeles Skyport
(Historic District)
Covina
Downtown L.A.
Istelé
Sunset Thruway
Musac (Draco's Turf)
The Abandoned Towns
La Republica de la Reina
Whittier
Whittier Sud
Nixonland
Los Alamitos Emergency Security Zone
Alameda Thruway
Long Beach
The Docks
The Happy Place (Terra Incognito)


SEE?
EVERY TIME YOU JUMP OVER A BUILDING YOU RUN INTO AN-OTHER ARMED BAND.
SOME WANT TO TAKE OVER, SOME WANT INDEPENDENCE.
SOME JUST WANT TO SET A FEW FIRES AND HAVE SOME CHUCKLES.
HAMS
PIIIG!!
BIG-MONEY HOG!
CORP-CORP-CORP! HONK AWAY, HOG!
YOU'RE...
...CALLING ME...
KRAKK
...THAT?!


YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT!
THIS KINDA STUPIDITY PLAYS RIGHT INTO THEIR FAT, SWEATY CORPORATE HANDS!
...LIKE LOTUSLAND.
STUPID TO ARGUE WITH A LOCUST, I KNOW. BUT I KEEP THINKING ABOUT WHAT THEY'RE ENDANGERING...
IT'S EXTRAORDINARY... THE POWERS THOSE MAD DREAMERS UNLEASHED ARE GREATER THAN ANYTHING AN AUTHORIZED LAB WOULD DARE PLAY WITH!
I PROBABLY SHOULDN'T BE MESSING WITH ALL THIS UNTIL I KNOW MORE ABOUT IT... BUT I DIDN'T GET TO BE LOTUSLAND'S CHIEF RESEARCH TECH BY BEING CAUTIOUS!
I'VE ALWAYS BEEN DRIVEN BY CURIOSITY -- A NEED TO KNOW --
-- AND HOW ELSE COULD I HAVE COME UP WITH THE VIRTUAL REALITY PROJECTION TECH THAT ENABLED ZAMORA TO BECOME THE TOP-PAID "ARTIST" IN THE BUSINESS.
NOT THAT MY SALARY'S EVER KEPT UP WITH HIS... BUT WHEN I DISCOVER SOMETHING LIKE THIS, I KNOW THAT THE MONEY ISN'T WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT!

THE KNIGHTS OF THE BANNER HARNESSED THE GAMMA-RADIATION THAT CREATED THE ORIGINAL HULK... THEN FOUND A WAY TO APPLY IT TO THE PSYCHE...
...A PROJECT SO POWERFUL THEY FORBADE EVEN THEMSELVES FROM DEVELOPING IT...
BUT MY HANDS... THEY'RE STIFFENING UP... MY GLOVES GLOWING LIKE THEY'RE COMPLETELY IRRADIATED!
I'D BETTER REPORT TO ZAMORA AND THE REST OF THEM!
OKAY, ANGEL... I'VE GOT YOU. WEIGHT ON ONE LEG... BALANCE YOURSELF... AND LET'S JUST START...
...WAAA!!
YOW! I'M SORRY, QUIRK!
HOW CUTE.

HAHAHAHAHA
Oh, LIGHTEN UP, KEISHA! I CAN'T PLAY THE OBSESSED LEADER OF THE REVOLUTION EVERY MINUTE!
I'LL -giggle- I'LL GET YOUR -snort- CHAIR, ANGEL!
SHE'S A CUTE LITTLE THING, ANGEL. AND I'VE NO DOUBT SHE CAN LEARN TO CHANNEL HER TROUBLE-MAKING URGES TOWARD THE COMMON GOOD.
JUST AS YOU CAN SURELY CHANNEL YOUR ARTISTIC SOUL INTO LEADERSHIP.
I KNEW THAT OUR MR. ZAMORA HAD ENGAGED YOU AS A CREATIVE ASSOCIATE, QUIRK.
WITH YOUR RESUMÉ IN COURAGEOUS, SUBVERSIVE MUSIC, YOU FIT RIGHT IN WITH THIS LITTLE ENTERTAINMENT-FOR-FREEDOM EXPERIMENT WE'RE RUNNING HERE.
BUT I DIDN'T KNOW YOU HAD SKILLS AS A PHYSICAL THERAPIST, TOO!
BUT I DON'T THINK EITHER OF YOU IS GOING TO TEACH THOSE SKILLS TO EACH OTHER!
AND WHAT'LL YOU TEACH US, KEISHA? HOW TO BE A SOULLESS CORP-HACK?!
I NEED YOU BECAUSE YOU KNOW HOW TO RUN THIS COMPANY, BUT IF ANY OF US NEEDS CHANGE --
ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT, YOU'RE OUR LEADER.
I JUST THOUGHT YOU MIGHT WANT TO KNOW THAT NIKOLAI APOLONIO SAYS HE'S DISCOVERED SOMETHING VERY IMPORTANT IN THE LAB. IF YOU DON'T MIND INTERRUPTING YOUR THERAPY...
OF COURSE NOT! CALL A MEETING NOW!
ALL OF MY PLANS FOR TAKING OVER THIS COMPANY INVOLVE WORKING MY WAY INTO ZAMORA'S CONFIDENCE... BUT WITH THAT UNDERRIPE LITTLE...
WELL, I HAVE MY OPTIONS.
SHE'S STILL ON SOME CORPORATE CHILL-LISTS. AND THE HULK DOESN'T EXACTLY SEEM HAPPY ABOUT THE WAY SHE LOOKS AT ZAMORA...
YEAH, LOTUS-LAND.
TIME I GOT BACK TO IT.
I THINK I CAN FIGURE ON THE LOCUSTS TO GO BACK TO THEIR STAR-WATCHING AND MEMORABILIA-HOARDING AND DROP THE LASER-CANNONS FOR A WHILE.
HE'S GONE.
AND HE DIDN'T SEE ME.
BUT AM I GLAD? OR...DO I WANT HIM TO KNOW?
MARIAN!
OH!
Y-YES, MY LORD?
I SAW HOW YOU WERE LOOKING AT THE HULK. IS THERE SOMETHING...I SHOULD KNOW ABOUT?
N-NOT AT ALL, MY LORD! I JUST WANTED TO MAKE SURE HE WAS GONE, AND NO MORE THREAT TO YOU!
I AM TOUCHED BY YOUR CONCERN... BUT YOU NEEDN'T TROUBLE YOUR PRETTY HEAD OVER ADONAI, LORD OF LOCUSTS!
OUR TIME TO SWARM WILL COME SOON ENOUGH, AND THEN EVEN THE HULK WILL HAVE A THING OR TWO TO WORRY ABOUT.
FINALLY -- A CHANCE TO GET BACK TO WHAT MATTERS TO ME! AND AS MUCH AS I HATE WHAT COMES NEXT, I'LL DO IT --
-- BECAUSE I'LL BE MORE USEFUL HERE AS A MEMBER OF THE LEADERSHIP COUNCIL THAN AS A BIG GUY WITH A SPIKED TONGUE!
SOMETIMES I WONDER WHY I EVEN BECOME THE HULK! WHAT CAN'T I HANDLE AS JOHN EISENHART?
FUNNY, THOUGH... I NEVER SEEM TO HAVE THOSE THOUGHTS WHEN I'M IN HIS BODY!

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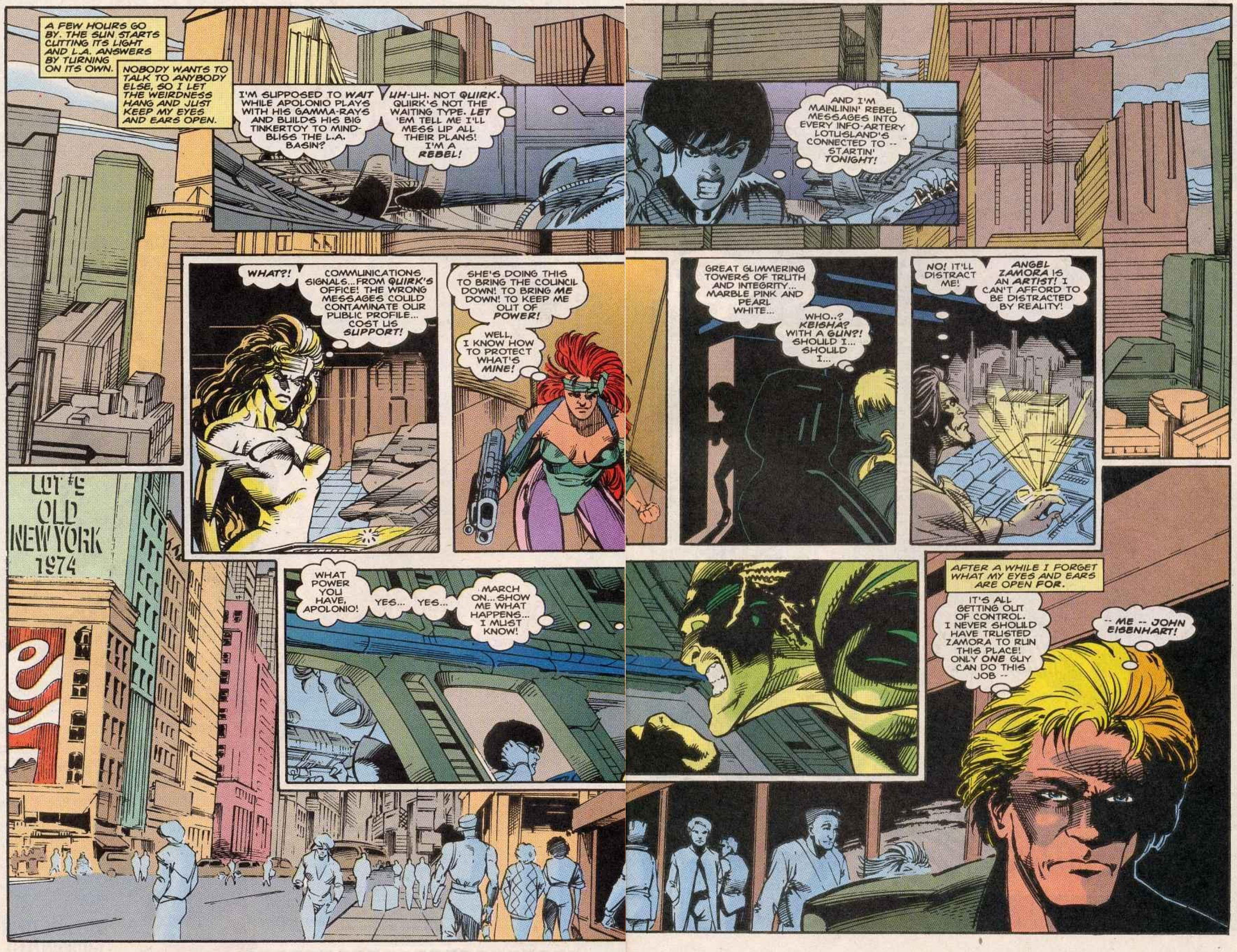
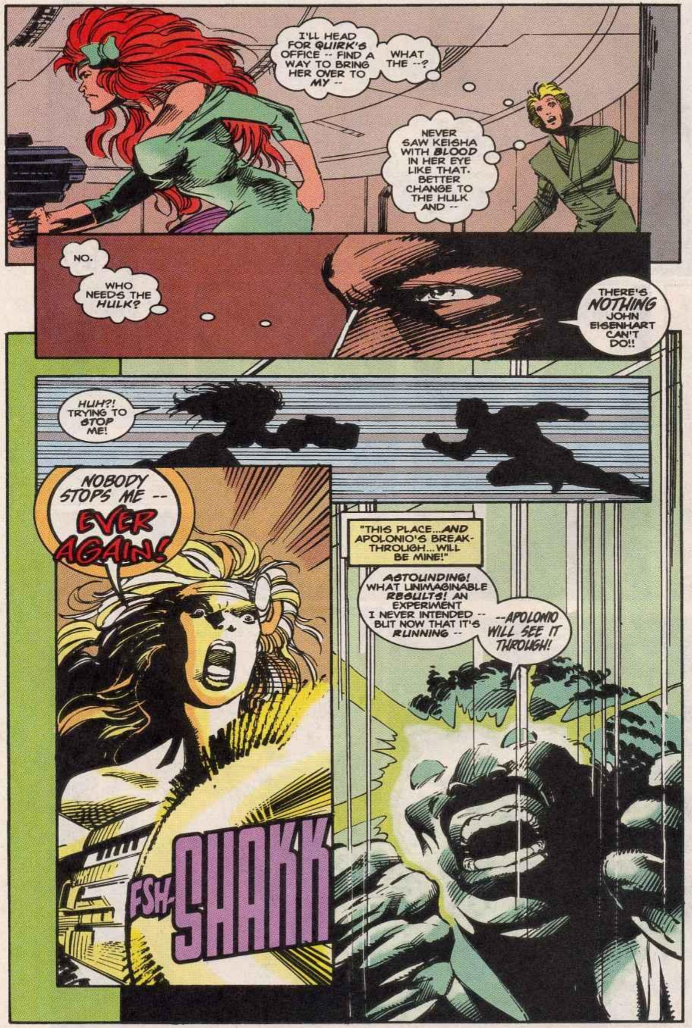
OF COURSE I NEED TO BE THE HULK! BECOMING HIM WAS THE MOMENT THAT TRANSFORMED ME FROM SLIME TO SOMEBODY WORTH KEEPING ALIVE!
BUT DO I STILL NEED HIM NOW? I'M SMARTER THAN HIM... I CAN PLAY THE GAME... AND PLAYING THE GAME IS HOW YOU GET THINGS DONE! HE'S...
...WAIT A MINUTE. WHY AM I THINKING ABOUT "HIM" AND "ME"? WE'RE --
GET OUT OF MY WAY!!
KEISHA --?!
QUIRK! ZAMORA! WHAT HAPPENED HERE?!
YOU WILL NOT BELIEVE IT! OR MAYBE YOU WILL!
MS. BLEACH-JOB ACTED LIKE SHE WAS GOING TO SNATCH DR. APOLONIO'S NEW GADGET AND RULE THE WORLD WITH IT!
THEN SHE CAUGHT HERSELF, LIKE SHE WAS COMING OUT OF A SPELL... AND RAN!
TAKE THIS AS A SIGN -- KEISHA'S A PLOTTER! I'VE TOLD YOU WE CAN'T AFFORD TO HAVE HER ON THIS COUNCIL!
JOHN, YOU KNOW OUR COMMITMENT TO DEMOCRACY AND FAIRNESS...
WE CAN'T... WE CAN'T MAKE THAT KIND OF JUDGMENT AGAINST KEISHA. CAN'T HOLD PEOPLE'S PASTS AGAINST THEM, CAN'T... CAN'T...
...CAN'T MESS UP THE STRUCTURE OF LOTUSLAND! IT'S ARTISTICALLY PERFECT! THE MIX OF PERSONALITIES! THE BALANCE OF HUES AND INTENSITIES!
IT'S A MOSAIC! DON'T MESS WITH MY BEAUTIFUL
MOSAAA-IC!

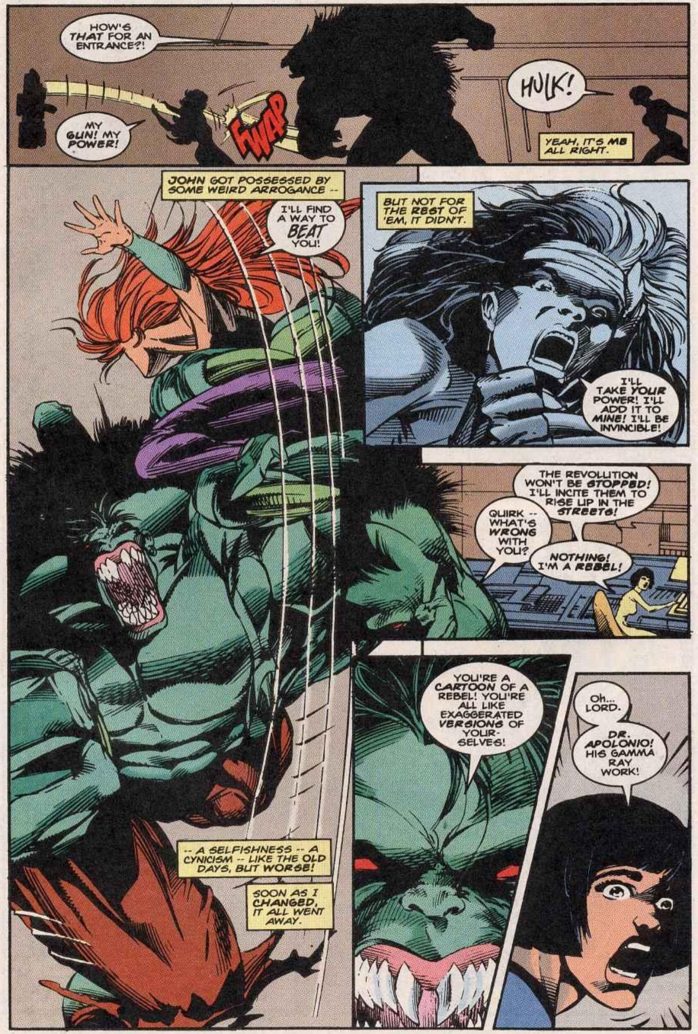
ZAMORA! ZAMORA!
WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU, MAN?
UHH...? WHAT...? JOHN, I...
...I NEED TO BE ALONE!
ALONE TO CONCEIVE THE FUTURE OF LOTUS-LAND!
QUIRK, WHAT'S GOTTEN INTO --
I DON'T KNOW! I DON'T CARE! I'M TIRED OF STANDING AROUND TALKING!
I'M ITCHING TO DO SOMETHING!
QUIRK?
IS EVERYBODY GOING NUTS AROUND HERE?
DR. APOLONIO, WHAT KIND OF "GADGET" WERE YOU...
DOCTOR?
SOMETHING INTERESTING IS HAPPENING HERE. AND I WILL KNOW WHAT IT IS.
I MUST KNOW!



A FEW HOURS GO BY. THE SUN STARTS CUTTING ITS LIGHT AND L.A. ANSWERS BY TURNING ON ITS OWN.
NOBODY WANTS TO TALK TO ANYBODY ELSE, SO I LET THE WEIRDNESS HANG AND JUST KEEP MY EYES AND EARS OPEN.
I'M SUPPOSED TO WAIT WHILE APOLONIO PLAYS WITH HIS GAMMA-RAYS AND BUILDS HIS BIG TINKERTOY TO MIND-BLISS THE L.A. BASIN?
UH-UH. NOT QUIRK. QUIRK'S NOT THE WAITING TYPE. LET 'EM TELL ME I'LL MESS UP ALL THEIR PLANS! I'M A REBEL!
AND I'M MAINLININ' REBEL MESSAGES INTO EVERY INFO-ARTERY LOTUSLAND'S CONNECTED TO -- STARTIN' TONIGHT!
WHAT?!
COMMUNICATIONS SIGNALS...FROM QUIRK'S OFFICE! THE WRONG MESSAGES COULD CONTAMINATE OUR PUBLIC PROFILE... COST US SUPPORT!
SHE'S DOING THIS TO BRING THE COUNCIL DOWN! TO BRING ME DOWN! TO KEEP ME OUT OF POWER!
WELL, I KNOW HOW TO PROTECT WHAT'S MINE!
GREAT GLIMMERING TOWERS OF TRUTH AND INTEGRITY... MARBLE PINK AND PEARL WHITE...
WHO..? KEISHA? WITH A GUN?! SHOULD I... SHOULD I...
NO! IT'LL DISTRACT ME!
ANGEL ZAMORA IS AN ARTIST! I CAN'T AFFORD TO BE DISTRACTED BY REALITY!
LOT #9
OLD
NEW YORK
1974
WHAT POWER YOU HAVE, APOLONIO!
YES... YES...
MARCH ON...SHOW ME WHAT HAPPENS... I MUST KNOW!
AFTER A WHILE I FORGET WHAT MY EYES AND EARS ARE OPEN FOR.
IT'S ALL GETTING OUT OF CONTROL. I NEVER SHOULD HAVE TRUSTED ZAMORA TO RUN THIS PLACE! ONLY ONE GUY CAN DO THIS JOB --
-- ME -- JOHN EISENHART!


I'LL HEAD FOR QUIRK'S OFFICE -- FIND A WAY TO BRING HER OVER TO MY --
WHAT THE --?
NEVER SAW KEISHA WITH BLOOD IN HER EYE LIKE THAT. BETTER CHANGE TO THE HULK AND --
NO.
WHO NEEDS THE HULK?
THERE'S NOTHING JOHN EISENHART CAN'T DO!!
HUH?! TRYING TO STOP ME!
NOBODY STOPS ME -- EVER AGAIN!
"THIS PLACE...AND APOLONIO'S BREAK-THROUGH...WILL BE MINE!"
ASTOUNDING! WHAT UNIMAGINABLE RESULTS! AN EXPERIMENT I NEVER INTENDED -- BUT NOW THAT IT'S RUNNING --
--APOLONIO WILL SEE IT THROUGH!
FSH-SHAKK

KEISHA'S GOT TROUBLES... AND SHE'S MAKIN' THEM MINE.
AAARRHH--
THE... PAIN...
...MAKING ME...
...CHANGE!
ALL RIGHT, MY LITTLE SUBVERSIVE! YOUR UPRISING ENDS RIGHT NOW -- IN A PUDDLE OF --
GRRAAAARR!
FSH-SHAKK



MARVEL COMICS

ITEM! Witness the "Incursion of the Skrulls" in the pages of MARVEL ACTION HOUR: THE FANTASTIC FOUR #6! Adapted from the runaway hit animated series, this issue has those shape-shifting Skrulls "impersonating the Fantastic Four, and creating all kinds of mischief," according to editor **Tom Daning**. Framed by the Skrulls, the FF are taken prisoner by the government, and must find a way to escape and prove their innocence. Tom described the Skrulls as "secret alien invaders whose ultimate goal is to take over the Earth." To achieve this goal, they need the FF out of the picture! The adaptation is by **Joey Cavalieri**, with art by "the unequaled **Quique Alcatena**," whom Tom calls "a great guy and a wonderful artist!"

ITEM! Don't touch that dial, Marveloid — there's more TV action on the way, as we release MARVEL ACTION HOUR: IRON MAN #6! This issue continues the three-part origins storyline, adapted from the blockbuster TV show. Last month, the focus was on Tony Stark. This month, the spotlight falls on the malevolent Mandarin! Editor Tom Daning revealed, "We learn about the Mandarin's rise to power and corruption; his thirst for world conquest, and his hatred for Tony Stark and Iron Man!" Tom picked two highlights of this issue: "an appearance by Fin Fang Foom, and the usual great art by **Anthony Williams** and **John Nyberg**!" We also get to see where Mandy got those craaaazy rings! Adaptation is by **Eric Fein.**

ITEM! If you are a fan of Firelord, you must not miss WARLOCK & THE INFINITY WATCH #39, which features the final fate of the flaming fury! You also get to see a brutal battle with the deadly Domitian, in a battle Warlock must not win! Writer **John Arcudi** promised, "It ends with an offbeat bang!"

John feels he and penciler **Pat Olliffe** have really begun to click these past few months. "I'm really happy with what Pat's been doing on the book!" Inks are provided by **Keith Williams**.

ITEM! Tom Palmer recently celebrated an anniversary of sorts: he has inked over 100 consecutive issues of the AVENGERS! In addition to his inking duties, Tom often colors the book (including covers), has penciled an upcoming cover, and has designed a dynamic new logo as well! "I've always had a feeling for the Avengers," said Tom, reflecting, "Like anything else you enjoy, the time passed by without me even realizing that 100 issues had gone by!" Tom's initial run on the book took place back in the sixties over such stalwarts as **John Buscema** and **Neal Adams**! The Titanic One returned to the book in the mid-1980s (again over John B.), and never left! Tom praised new penciler **Mike Deodato**, noting, "He's taking the AVENGERS in a different direction. It's gonna be a brand-new-looking book!" Tom also gives high marks to long-time AVENGERS scribe **Bob Harras**. "He's really coming up with some great stories!" See for yourself next week in AVENGERS #385, which features a final assault by the Red Skull against a weakened Captain America. Tom acknowledged his gratitude to his editors: **Ralph** (**Macchio**) and **Matt** (**Idelson**) are great to work with!" Is Tom ready for another 100 issues of the AVENGERS? He replied with a laugh, "I just take 'em one at a time!"

STILL ON SALE

- **GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY #59:** The **Silver Surfer** of the 31st century is dying! By Gallagher/West/Montano
- **NICK FURY/BLACK WIDOW: DEATH DUTY #1:** 48-page graphic novel! Nick and Natasha — in the shadow of the **Night Raven**! By Ridout/Adlard
- **SILVER SABLE #35:** Together again for the first time: Silver Sable and Li'l Silvie! By Wright/Purcell & Butler/Eklund
- **WAR MACHINE #13:** The **Rush Team** puts the crush on War Machine! By Abnett/Chlystek!
- **CAPTAIN AMERICA #438:** Introducing Cap's all-new exo-skeleton! Featuring the villainy of **Flag-Smasher**! By Gruenwald/Hoover/Bulanadi
- **DARKHAWK #50:** Double-sized *final issue*! Darkhawk overcomes **Overhawk**! By Fingeroth/Smith/Akin
- **FANTASTIC FORCE #6: Vibraxis** tries to break up a gang war — and fights a human lightning bolt called **Go-Devil**! By Brevoort & Kanterovich/Bastianoni/Cabrera
- **FORCE WORKS #10:** Introducing **Dreamguard**! He'll bring your night-mares to life! Plus: **Wonder-Man**'s funeral! By Abnett & Lanning/Calafiore/Garcia
- **NAMOR #61:** Namor is trapped in the **Black Knight**'s soulsword with his dead ex-wife, **Marrina**! By Herdling/Isherwood
- **BLACKWULF #10:** In his final issue, Blackwulf goes out fighting against his devious dad, **Lord Tantalus**! By Herdling/Medina
- **CAPTAIN AMERICA #1 MARVEL MILESTONE:** Reprinting the very first appearance of the living legend! By Simon/Kirby
- **CAPTAIN AMERICA TPB: WAR & REMEMBRANCE:** Cap takes on **Mr. Hyde, Batroc, Baron Blood**, and more!
- **ELEKTRA: ROOT OF EVIL #1 OF 4:** From the pages of DAREDEVIL, the lady ninja stalks the sinister **Snakeroot**! By Chichester/McDaniel
- **MARVEL SPOTLIGHT ON CAPTAIN AMERICA #2 OF 4:** Classic shield-swinging sagas!

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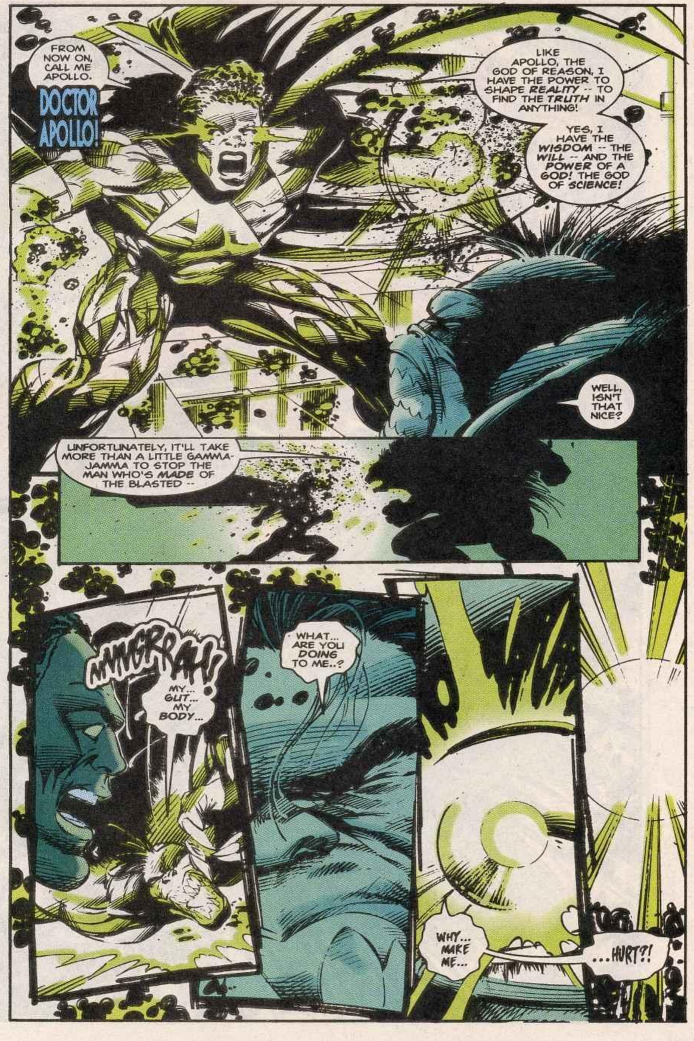


TONGUE LASHINGS

JOEY CAVALIERI
EDITOR

LIA PELOSI
ASSISTANT EDITOR

C/O MARVEL COMICS GROUP
387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10016

ATTENTION CORRESPONDENTS: ALL LETTERS TO BE CONSIDERED FOR PUBLICATION MUST INCLUDE YOU NAME AND ADDRESS THOUGH WE WILL GLADLY WITHHOLD THAT INFO BY REQUEST.

Out Of My Head

I'm grateful now to those people who advertise on the tube saying they "make technology people want." Like their CD player that goes uninterrupted for eighteen hours. Thoughtful of them to build in six hours for sleep. When was the last time you had eighteen free hou–

Off With His Head

Enough is enough. It is this obsession with pop cultural trivia that is strangling the American character, auguring the downfall of the American Republic. The American Experiment is over. It is time to go back to the laboratory. A New Era has begun, one ruled by...myself, Doom the First. (Pause for rabid applause, heartfelt thanks of grateful nation) Yes, Doom has taken over USA of 2099. These events are chronicled in DOOM 2099 #29, but make themselves felt throughout the 2099 Universe. Find your place in my New World Order...NOW.

MARVEL INTERNAL CORRESPONDENCE
To: Joey Cavalieri
Subject: Spiritual Fulfillment

Dear Joey,
Re: Out of My Head column in Hulk 2099 #2
I prefer my sashimi carved in the shape of Funny Bones. And in your quest for perfection, never forget the sage, old saying: "Do not wish, for you may receive."

Fabian Nicieza
Somewhere Downstairs

You all know Mr. Nicieza: the prince of time management. Writes fifty books a month, and still has time to send us fan mail. Boy, what I'd accomplish if I knew the secret.

Dear Tongue Lashings,
I've read every Hulk 2099 story and was happy to see he was finally given his own series. I really like the look of the character. The person who designed him and his bestial look is a genius. Hulk 2099 makes the present day Hulk look wimpy in comparison. Will Hulk ever team up with the X-Men?

Shane K. Carvalho
Kailua, HI 96734

Look for 2099 A.D. #1 in March, Shane, all the 2099 heroes will be meeting in that special issue. Also, thanks to their close proximity in the 2099 Universe, we plan for the Hulk and the X-Men 2099 to meet in this book later this year.

Dear Hulk 2099,
The artwork in HULK 2099 is some of the best in the comic industry. I also love the coloring. Something in the way this book is colored gives it a darker and more eerie look. I wasn't sure if I'd like the character, but now that he's in his own book, I do like it. Gerard Jones' writing is superb.

I also really like Draco. He seems to be the kind of villain that can stick around, something the other 2099 villains seem to be having a hard time doing. How about Draco encountering Doom somewhere along the line? The Warriors of the Human Tribe looked pretty interesting. Maybe we could see a little of them.

Though I'm not a fan of the present day hero, maybe you could do an Iron Man 2099. I mean with Stark-Fujikawa and Iron Man 2020, it makes sense to have an Iron Man 2099. I'm also on a crusade for Man-Thing 2099. He'd make an interesting futuristic character.

Mark "Troll" Trollinger
Smyrna, GA 30082

The entire 2099 universe will encounter Doom soon, Mark. As for an Iron Man 2099, we've considered it. But in the meantime, there's Galahad 2099 in our UNLIMITED.

Dear Tongue Lashings,
Hulk 2099 #2 was really neat. Draco's an awesome foe! I loved it when Zamora started the crowd riot and freed the Hulk. And then when the Hulk got really mad and crushed Draco.
1. Have a foe to match Hulk's strength.
2. Have Gawain come back to life as an enemy.
Until Hulk flosses with his tongue, Make Mine Marvel.

Brandon James
Mulina, OR 97042

Glad you enjoyed the issue, Brandon! Wait till you see the foe we come up with for Green-skin next!

Dear Joey & Lia,
I've really enjoyed the first two issues of Hulk 2099. The story seems to have taken off and the character appears to be becoming a lot stronger since leaving the UNLIMITED.

Draco is an exciting villain, one of the few introduced, particularly against the Hulk, who has the potential to be a major foe.

I'd like to see more of John Eisenhart's character, I hope that Gerard Jones is going to delve deeper into him and more of his emotions.. I'd like to see him get past the death of Gawain and take it on to another level.

Malcolm Davis and Chris Ivy make a great team. The Hulk's never looked meaner. I'm looking forward to seeing how the Hulk is going to deal with Doom, since he's never come face to face with him. I'm guessing they won't be shaking hands when Doom finally shows up.

James Monroe
Rockford, IL

You guessed right, James, things are going to become even more chaotic for the big green guy once Doom makes his presence known to Lotusland.

Dear Tongue Lashings,
I know you guys have heard a million opinions about this but I thought I'd put my two cents in anyway.

Please, please keep the 2099 Universe separated from the rest of Marvel. I'm writing this now because a lot of your characters, with the new introduction of the Hulk, have present day counterparts and I know the temptation is going to be there to do team ups and battles. I really don't think it will strengthen the titles over all and may be just a cheap trick for some people who think they want to see it.

Besides, your characters are strong enough on their own and don't need to get mixed up with another time.

What I would love to see is more interaction between the characters. How 'bout Hulk vs. Spidey? It would be a classic battle with a future twist!

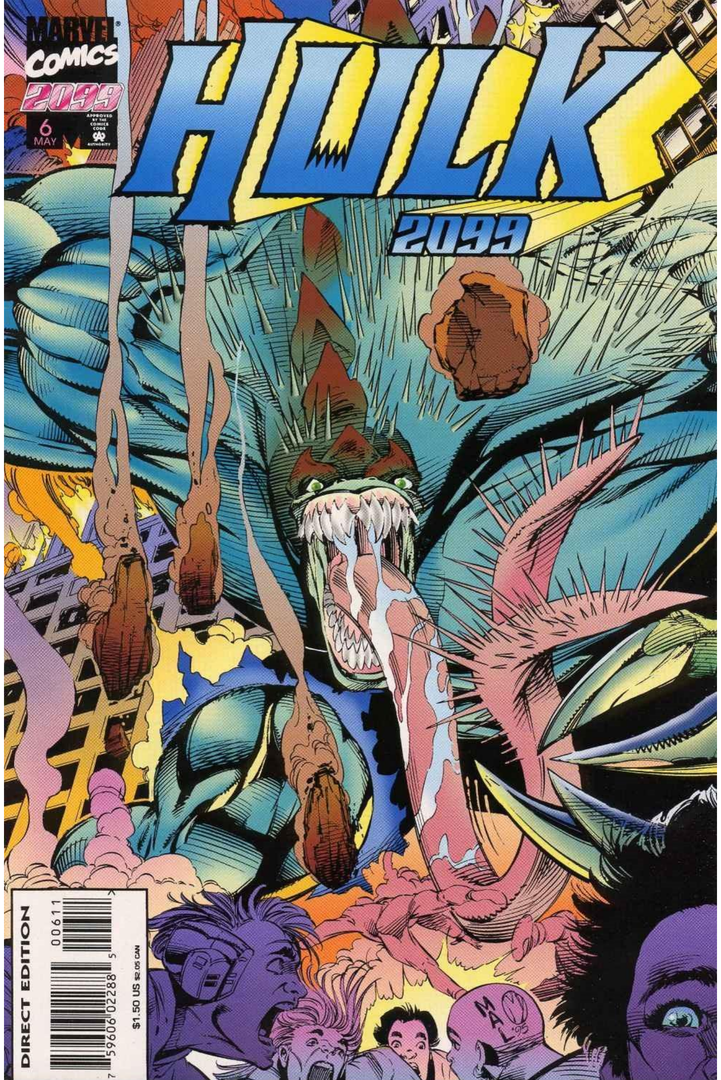
Kevin Hanniff
Pittsburgh, PA

Stick around, for 2099 A.D. #1 and see them meet, Kev!

NEXT ISSUE

The struggle for Lotusland continues! All of our capricious cast members are garrulously gamma-irradiated, but most of all Doctor Apollo and the Hulk! What'd happen if gamma radiation broke out in your home, school or workplace? It might go something like HULK 2099 #6!

YOU TRAP ME IN THIS PLACE... TRY TO HURT ME... MAKE ME WEAK... TURN ME INTO LITTLE PINK MAN!
NOBODY TRAP ME NOW! NOW I CRUSH YOU ALL!!
UH-OH! HOW MUCH UGLY CAN YOU STAND? COME BACK NEXT MONTH TO TEST YOUR LIMIT IN THE MAGNIFICENT MEDLEY OF MARVEL MADNESS CALLED...
"AND HE IS US!"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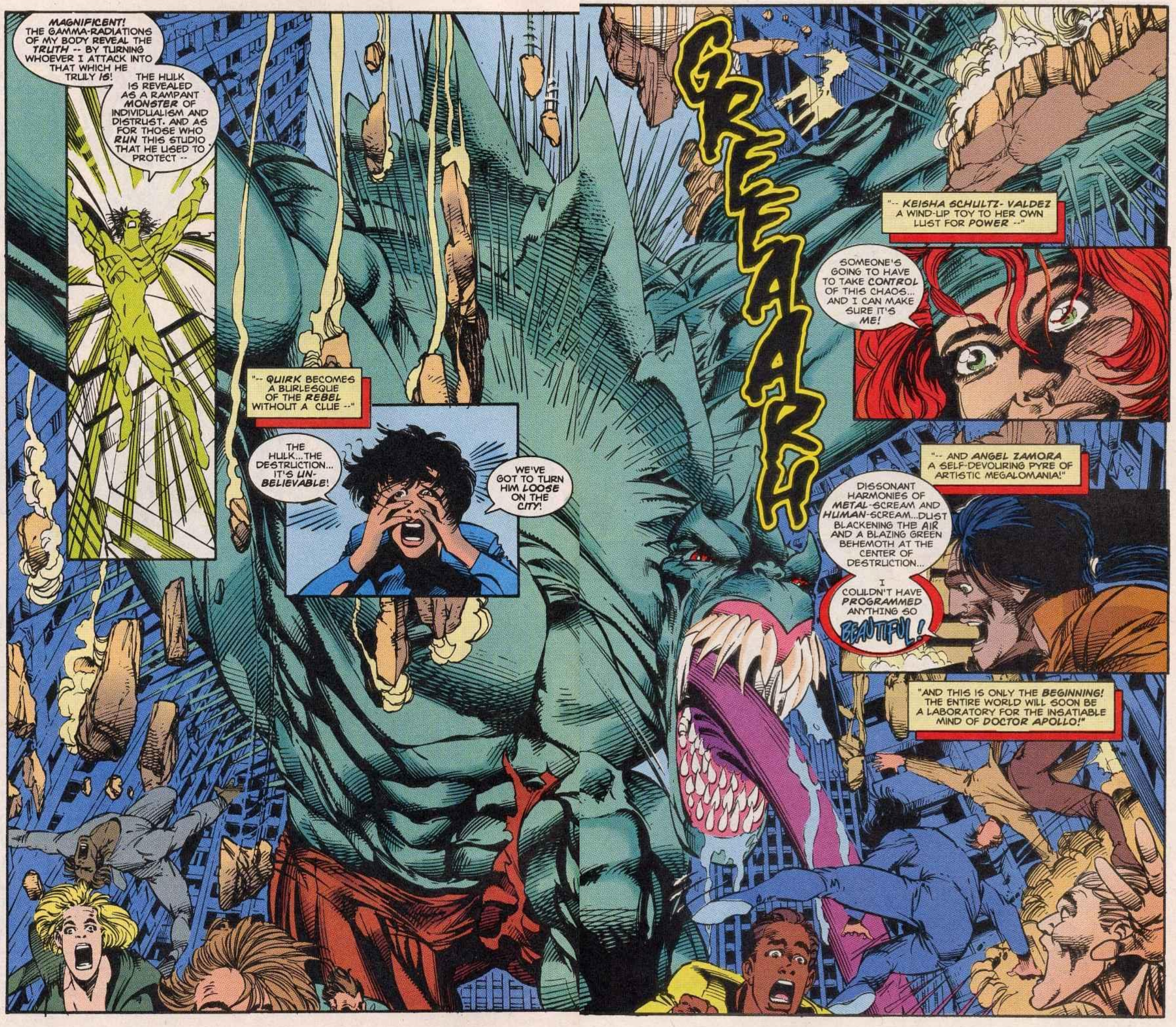
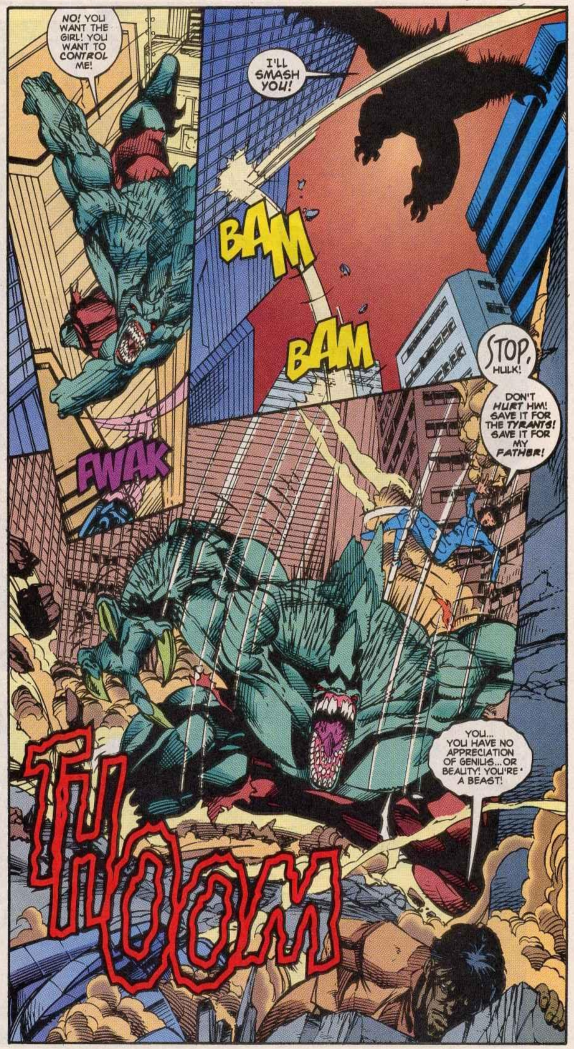
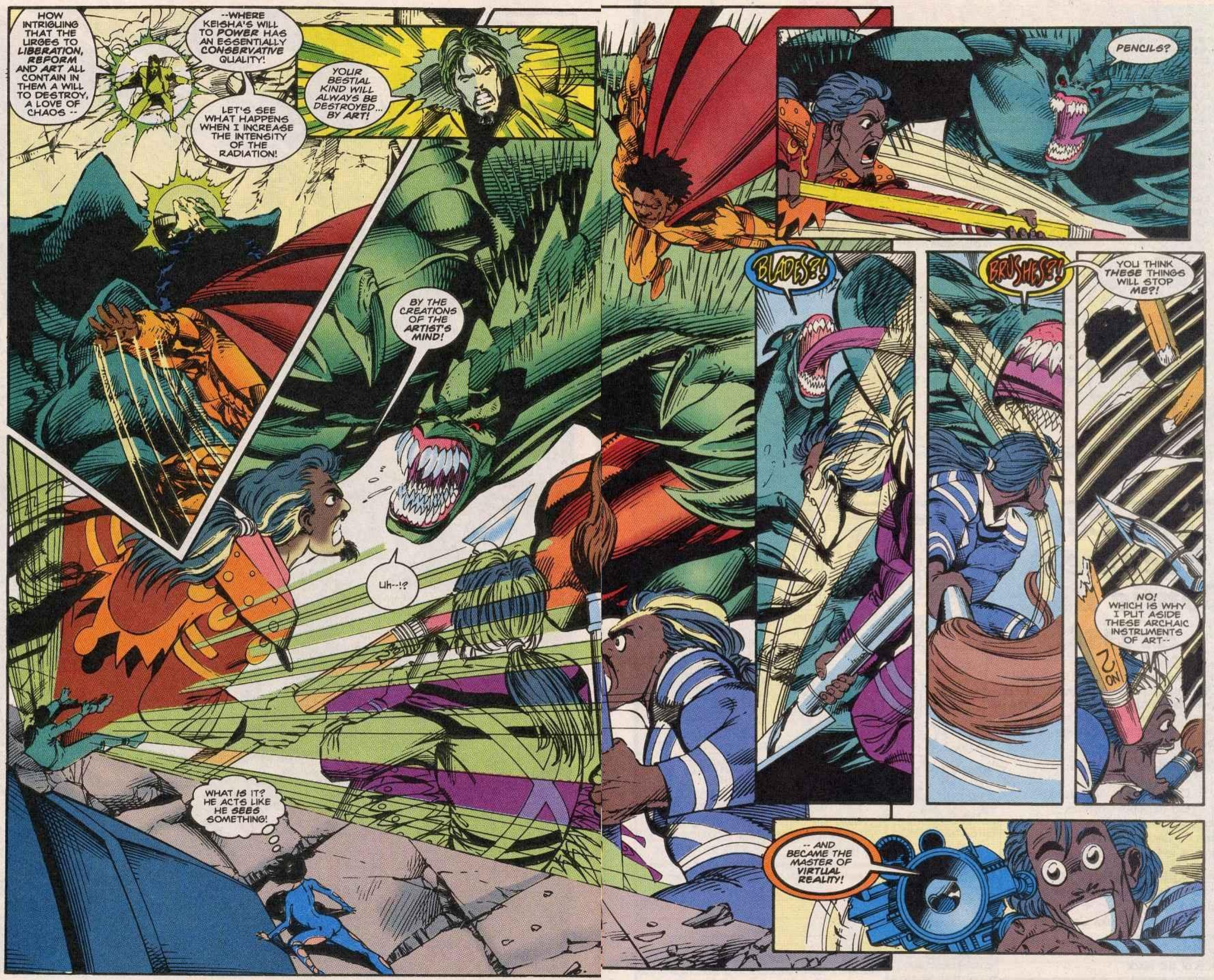


HULK! LISTEN! I CAN GET YOU WHAT YOU WANT!
WITH MY PLANNING AND YOUR POWER WE CAN KNOCK DOWN THE WEAK, STUPID, PHONY "LEADERS" OF THIS PLACE!
WE CAN MAKE LOTUSLAND A JUGGERNAUT OF INFLUENCE AND PROFIT! YOU CAN BE ANOTHER DRACO!
POWER.
DO WHATEVER I WANT.
SMASH MY ENEMIES... LIKE DRACO!
DON'T DO IT, HULK!
IT'S JUST LIKE KEISHA...
OR IS IT? I CAN'T SHAKE THE FEELING THAT SOMETHING'S WEIRD ABOUT ALL OF US... INCLUDING ME!
YOU SAY... I GET WHAT I WANT? POWER?
YES, HULK, YES! WHAT ELSE IS THERE TO WANT? LET ME GIVE IT TO YOU! LET ME GIVE IT TO YOU!

FWAP
WHOOF!
YOU SAY THAT TO TRAP ME!
I DON'T WANT POWER! I WANT OUT!
SSSHMP
I'LL SMASH THESE WALLS DOWN! I'LL SMASH EVERYTHING, ALL THE WAY TO THE DESERT!
NO, HULK!
YOU'LL TRY TO STOP ME, TOO?!
AAUGH! N-NO!
I WANT TO GO WITH YOU! TWO REBELS -- RUNNING ACROSS AMERICA WILD AND FREE, NOTHING STOPPING US!
YES. I LIKE THAT.
I LIKE YOU.

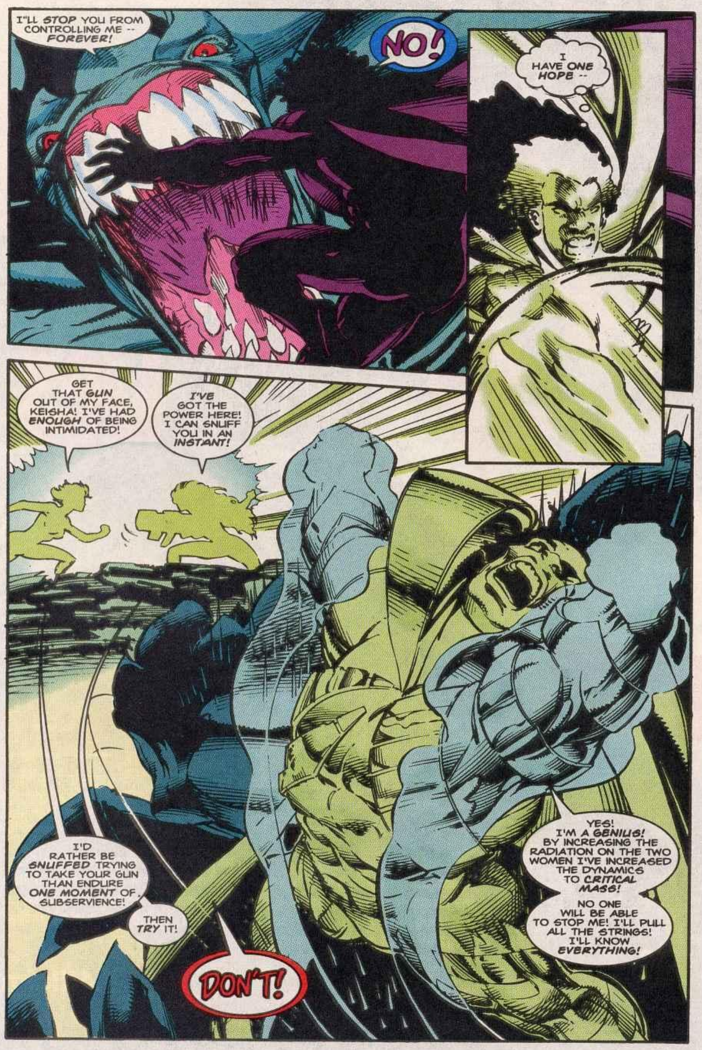
THEN LET'S GO! FASTER, PUSSYCAT! SMASH! SMASH!
NO!
DON'T BOUND OVER THE PLACE! BLOW THROUGH IT! TEAR IT DOWN, MAKE IT BURN, SEND FLAMES LIKE BLOOD-RED FLOWERS TO THE SKY!
ZAMORA! JOIN US! THINK OF THE REVOLUTIONARY ART WE'LL MAKE!
YES! BALLETS OF DEVASTATION FOR ME TO DESIGN AND YOU TO SCORE AND THE HULK TO EXECUTE!


NO! YOU WANT THE GIRL! YOU WANT TO CONTROL ME!
I'LL SMASH YOU!
BAM
BAM
STOP, HULK!
DON'T HURT HIM! SAVE IT FOR THE TYRANTS! SAVE IT FOR MY FATHER!
FWAK
YOU... YOU HAVE NO APPRECIATION OF GENIUS... OR BEAUTY! YOU'RE A BEAST!
THOOM


HOW INTRIGUING THAT THE URGES TO LIBERATION, REFORM AND ART ALL CONTAIN IN THEM A WILL TO DESTROY, A LOVE OF CHAOS --
--WHERE KEISHA'S WILL TO POWER HAS AN ESSENTIALLY CONSERVATIVE QUALITY!
LET'S SEE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I INCREASE THE INTENSITY OF THE RADIATION!
YOUR BESTIAL KIND WILL ALWAYS BE DESTROYED... BY ART!
BY THE CREATIONS OF THE ARTIST'S MIND!
Uh--!?
WHAT IS IT? HE ACTS LIKE HE SEES SOMETHING!
PENCILS?
BLADES?!
BRUSHES?!
YOU THINK THESE THINGS WILL STOP ME?!
NO! WHICH IS WHY I PUT ASIDE THESE ARCHAIC INSTRUMENTS OF ART--
-- AND BECAME THE MASTER OF VIRTUAL REALITY!

SEE WHAT THE FIGHT'S LIKE *NOW*, HULK! WHEN THE WORLD MAKES NO SENSE AND THE LAWS OF PHYSICS DON'T APPLY!
THERE'S NOTHING TO DESTROY BUT *YOURSELF!*
HEY, WATCH IT!
WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE GETTING *AWAY* FROM HERE! WHAT'S GOING ON WITH EVERYBODY? WHY ISN'T ANYBODY MAKING *SENSE?!*
SO. NOW I *KNOW.*
BUT WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF I INCREASED THE *HULK'S* POWER YET AGAIN?
HE'S NEARLY OUT OF HAND ALREADY... IT WOULD BE INCREDIBLY DANGEROUS, EVEN TO *ME...*
BUT I HAVE TO *KNOW!* NOTHING ELSE MATTERS EXCEPT *KNOWING!*
QUIRK'S RIGHT-- SOMETHING'S *WRONG* WITH ZAMORA AND THE HULK!
WELL, SHE'S ABOUT TO GIVE *ME* THE SOLUTION!

STOP IT -- OR SHE *DIES!*
I WON'T LET YOU TWO DESTROY THE STUDIO I'VE BEEN WORKING TO CONTROL FOR SO MANY *MONTHS!*
APOLONIO DID SOMETHING TO YOUR BRAINS -- NOW GET 'EM *STRAIGHT* OR YOU'LL NEVER SEE THAT OVERDEVELOPED *INFANT* YOU'RE BOTH IN LOVE WITH!
YOU'RE TRYING... TO *CONTROL* ME! I DON'T *LIKE* THAT!
BUT I DON'T LIKE THE GIRL *DEAD!* I WANT TO GO WITH HER. BE *FREE* WITH HER.
SHE SAYS APOLONIO... DOCTOR APOLLO... DID SOMETHING TO ME. CONTROLLING ME... THROUGH MY HEAD!
WHAT NOW? IF HE TURNS ON ME, AT *HIS* LEVEL OF POWER, I'LL HAVE NO CHANCE! BUT TO TURN HIM *BACK* WOULD RUIN MY EXPERIMENT!
I CAN'T STOP EXPERIMENTING... I HAVE TO *KNOW!* TO *KNOW!*
YOU!


I'LL STOP YOU FROM CONTROLLING ME -- FOREVER!
NO!
I HAVE ONE HOPE --
GET THAT GUN OUT OF MY FACE, KEISHA! I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF BEING INTIMIDATED!
I'VE GOT THE POWER HERE! I CAN SNUFF YOU IN AN INSTANT!
I'D RATHER BE SNUFFED TRYING TO TAKE YOUR GUN THAN ENDURE ONE MOMENT OF SUBSERVIENCE!
THEN TRY IT!
YES! I'M A GENIUS! BY INCREASING THE RADIATION ON THE TWO WOMEN I'VE INCREASED THE DYNAMICS TO CRITICAL MASS!
NO ONE WILL BE ABLE TO STOP ME! I'LL PULL ALL THE STRINGS! I'LL KNOW EVERYTHING!
DON'T!

WAIT! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT'S HAPPENING... HOW TO FIGHT IT...
SOMEBODY OUT THERE... KNOWS. CAN'T REMEMBER WHO... BUT SOMEBODY WHO CAN'T BE HERE WITH THE OTHERS...
...NOT WHEN I'M HERE!
TOOM
YES... HERE I CAN GET HIM. I CAN CALL HIM... THE SMART ONE...
...BUT WHERE?
WHY DO I THINK HE'S... INSIDE SOMEWHERE? I HAVE TO LOOK... IN MY HEAD...
...HAVE TO BRING HIM OUT...
NO! I WON'T!
I WON'T BE SMALL AND WEAK AGAIN! NEVER AGAIN!

HE'S GONE! I DID IT! I SAVED MY STUDIO!
I HAVE THE POW-ERRR!
FASCIST!
MY BEST LAB ANIMAL! THEY CHASED HIM AWAY! THEY OWE ME FOR THIS! THEY OWE THE CAUSE OF SCIENCE!
THEY'D BETTER BE BLOODY EDUCATIONAL THEMSELVES -- AS I INCREASE THEIR RADIATION YET AGAIN!
I'LL EAT YOUR FASCIST HEART AND WRITE A SONG TO FREEDOM WITH YOUR BLOOD!
AND I WILL REMOVE ANYONE WHO QUESTIONS MY AUTHORITY!
QUIRK! BEAUTIFUL BLOSSOM OF THROBBING YOUTH! DON'T BE PLUCKED! DON'T BE PLUCKED!
I CAN'T STOP YOU... CAN'T REACH YOU WITH THIS SPINDLY SCULPTURE OF A BODY, CARVED IN VIOLENCE AND ENAMELED IN PAIN...
ELIMINATE THE OBSTACLE!
TEAR YOU APART!
...BUT WITH A VISION... AN ANGUISHED SCREAM OF SIGHT...
GOT TO GET AWAY! BE FREE! BE -- HUH?!
PICTURE... IN THE SKY! THE GIRL! HURT!
GOT TO HELP HER! BUT I CAN'T!
ONLY... ONE CAN HELP HER!
YAAA! YOU... VIRUS!
HRRR CHOMP
DISCUSSION IS TERMINATED!
ZZAKK
TIME TO DOWNSIZE THE ORGANIZATION!

REALITY BYTES 2099 BITMAPPED

This is the inaugural edition of the **2099 Bullpen Bulletins Page**, so we kind of needed some sense of moment...despite that it merely condemns us to desperate attempts to amuse, confound and delight our readers. So if you happen to see someone on the downtown local furtively jotting entries on sheets of cheap paper, that may be neither some asylum emigre's assassination theories; nor some neighborhood art-school phony's alleged poetry. Be kind...it's probably your beleaguered Marvel editors, prepping another **2099** page!

FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS: **Rick** is coming back. Yeah, **Rick Leonardi's** had as much down time as a human can endure. Now he's eager to get back to drawing the adventures of everybody's favorite futuristic arachnid, **SPIDER-MAN 2099**.

So why isn't he doing it right away? First he's laboring mightily to produce **SPIDEY 2099 PROJECT X**, which we've been hinting about to you in our letters pages. Well, it's finally coming to pass. It's merely the Marvel Megaverse event of a lifetime! **Peter David** has written a spiffy bookshelf edition **SPIDER-MAN 2099** story, in the wild and unrestrained tradition of his work on the **HULK: Future Imperfect** saga. If you dug his work on that, you'll especially enjoy this book, for more reasons than we can divulge right now! Trust us!

SECOND ORDER OF BUSINESS: How could we have foreseen that **Greg** and **Tim Hildebrandt** would be so impressed with our **X-MEN 2099** title that they'd want to contribute to their ongoing adventures themselves! Another impressive bookshelf edition is coming...to be entirely painted by the **Brothers Hildebrandt**! **John Francis Moore** penned this extra long tale, entitled **Oasis**, and fantasy's most famous illustrators are working on it now! If they can coax Joey off the island of Manhattan to their studio, without him fearing he'll be eaten by Smaug or an orc or something, maybe he'll score some of their layouts to reproduce here!

THIRD ORDER OF BUSINESS: Feel that chill in the air? That slightly colder, frostier affect your town seems to have these days? No, not just the temperature. America has become colder in general because **Doom** is running it! **Doom** has decided that the USA is a threat to the security of Latveria and the world at large, and has decided to step in and seize control of it himself!

That makes for major changes in the **2099 Universe**! So many changes and repercussions, in fact, that we've been forced to do a prequel to the cataclysmic events of **DOOM 2099 A.D. #29**, where it all begins.

An auger of things to come will be the mighty crossover that is **2099 A.D. #1**! It sports the first-ever clear chromium cover (trust us, it's gorgeous), and is an extra long tale in which the **2099 Universe** takes another step closer to the tighter continuity you've demanded!

FOURTH ORDER OF BUSINESS: In case you haven't got the word by now **Doom** is our Chief Executive. "Executive" like in the sense of "one who executes." The fun (and, boy are we ever using that noun loosely) begins in **DOOM 2099 A.D. #29**. It, too, carries a real cool chromium cover, and because we made a big foofaraw about the whole schmear, the book carries no ads. It's an extra-long story, with only two non-comics pages: The letters pages and the new "Off With His Head" column written by the man we like to call "Mister President" within earshot, and a word or two greeting from the book's new writer, **Warren Ellis**. And what a fine job he does, detailing the events of the **2099 Writer's Conference III**.

Have we mentioned, by the way, that **Pat Broderick** is doing some of the most amazing artwork anywhere here? The finely-detailed covers...the remarkably atmospheric insides...We can't express our admiration enough.

FIFTH ORDER OF BUSINESS: On the net and in the mail, we've been poking around for reaction to our double-sized **25th Anniversary Issues**, with those snazzy embossed covers and previews of series to come.

Your approval and enthusiasm was unanimous. But there were still some stalwarts who felt "double-sized" meant that the main story should be longer!

We hear you. That's the reason for the extra long **DOOM** and **2099 A.D.** stories, but it's also the reason that the upcoming **X-MEN 2099 #25** will be a double-sized, book length extravaganza. **John**, **Ron** and **Harry** have made up their minds that they're going to do it, so they're already conferring by phone as to how they can do this without goin' nuts. Anything with this much planning and anticipation has gotta be good!

SIXTH ORDER OF BUSINESS: The biggest change in the **2099** firmament so far: **PUNISHER 2099 A.D.: AGENT OF S.H.I.E.L.D.** What does this mean? All will become clear very soon.

MORE OF MARVEL 2099

(We're ba-aack!)

RAVAGE 2099 #30-Hellrock celebrates victory, in the shadow of Doom.

GHOST RIDER 2099 A.D. #13-Ghostie gets a heck of a wake up call! Doom has taken over...and it's just as surprising to D/Monix as well.

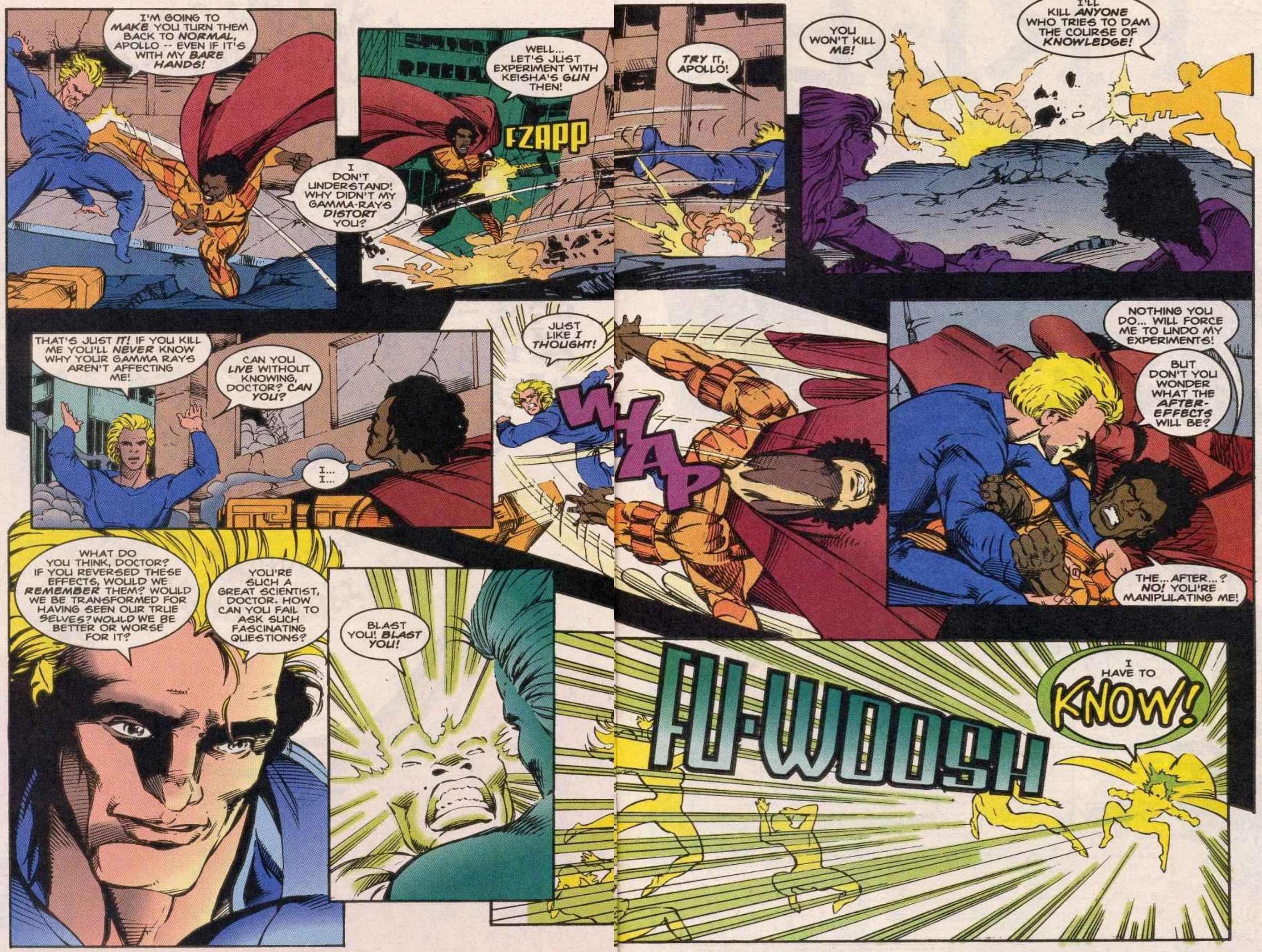
HULK 2099 #6-The second gamma-radiated character in the 2099-o-verse, Doctor Apollo, makes his bid for control of Lotusland!

X-MEN 2099 A.D. #20-Bloodhawk is back in a big way! You won't believe your eyes when you see the size of his foe Monstrobot! And man, that Lim and Candelario art!

PUNISHER 2099 A.D.: AGENT OF S.H.I.E.L.D. #28-Doom transforms Jake Gallows life! Plus the extraordinary end of the Public Eye!

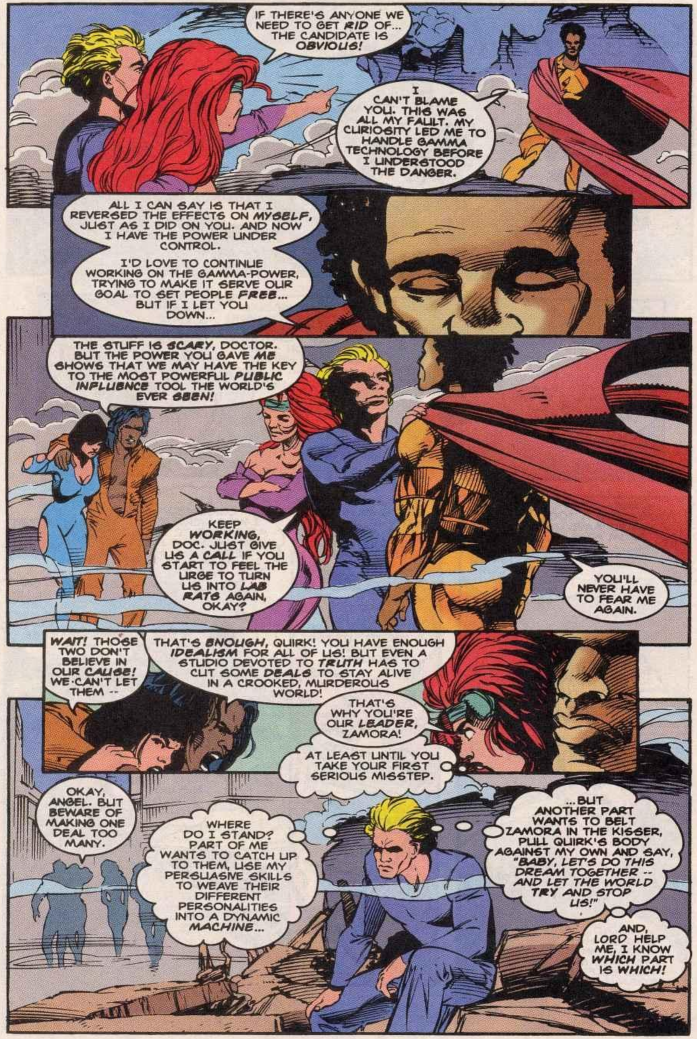
SPIDER-MAN 2099 #31-"Route 666," An eerie, uncanny experience that is our wall-crawlers most bizarre adventure yet!

DOOM 2099 A.D. #29-Doom makes his bid for the US aided by his Black Cabinet, the Panther's Rage .



I'M GOING TO MAKE YOU TURN THEM BACK TO NORMAL, APOLLO -- EVEN IF IT'S WITH MY BARE HANDS!
I DON'T UNDERSTAND! WHY DIDN'T MY GAMMA-RAYS DISTORT YOU?
WELL... LET'S JUST EXPERIMENT WITH KEISHA'S GUN THEN!
FZAPP
TRY IT, APOLLO!
YOU WON'T KILL ME!
I'LL KILL ANYONE WHO TRIES TO DAM THE COURSE OF KNOWLEDGE!
THAT'S JUST IT! IF YOU KILL ME YOU'LL NEVER KNOW WHY YOUR GAMMA RAYS AREN'T AFFECTING ME!
CAN YOU LIVE WITHOUT KNOWING, DOCTOR? CAN YOU?
I... I...
JUST LIKE I THOUGHT!
WHAP
NOTHING YOU DO... WILL FORCE ME TO UNDO MY EXPERIMENTS!
BUT DON'T YOU WONDER WHAT THE AFTER-EFFECTS WILL BE?
THE... AFTER...? NO! YOU'RE MANIPULATING ME!
WHAT DO YOU THINK, DOCTOR? IF YOU REVERSED THESE EFFECTS, WOULD WE REMEMBER THEM? WOULD WE BE TRANSFORMED FOR HAVING SEEN OUR TRUE SELVES? WOULD WE BE BETTER OR WORSE FOR IT?
YOU'RE SUCH A GREAT SCIENTIST, DOCTOR. HOW CAN YOU FAIL TO ASK SUCH FASCINATING QUESTIONS?
BLAST YOU! BLAST YOU!
FU-WOOSH
I HAVE TO KNOW!

WHAT... WHAT HAPPENED? FEEL LIKE I'M WAKING UP...OUT OF A REALLY WEIRD DREAM...
A NIGHTMARE, QUIRK. A NIGHT-MARE...CAUSED BY ME!
YEAH. EXCEPT IT WAS REAL!
AND WE FINALLY SAW THIS WHACKO FOR WHAT SHE REALLY IS -- A POWER-HUNGRY KILLER WHO'S GOING TO CHILL US ALL UNLESS WE GET RID OF HER!
AND WHAT ABOUT YOU? IT WAS YOU WHO NEARLY RUINED EVERYTHING WITH YOUR POINTLESS SUBVERSION -- AND ZAMORA HELPED YOU!
I'M THE ONE WHO SAVED THIS STUDIO!
SAVED IT FOR YOURSELF! IT TOOK JOHN TO SAVE US FROM YOU!
WHY COULDN'T APOLONIO CHANGE YOU INTO YOUR "TRUE SELF," ANYWAY?
HE DID. THAT'S WHAT DID HIM IN. EVIDENTLY MY "TRUE SELF" IS ARROGANT...COCKY AND VERY SLICK AT EXPLOITING OTHER PEOPLE'S WEAK SPOTS!
GOOD SKILLS TO HAVE. IT JUST SHOWS, QUIRK, THAT IF LOTUSLAND IS GOING TO SURVIVE, IT NEEDS ALL OUR STRENGHS AND... QUIRKS.
AND IT SHOWS THAT JOHN MAY HAVE MORE TO INTEREST ME THAN I THOUGHT.
I'M CONFUSED! I WAS INCREDIBLY ATTRACTED TO JOHN WHEN WE WERE BOTH WEIRD... AND HE WAS THE HULK!
BUT HOW COULD I BE TURNED ON BY A SLICK JERK LIKE HE JUST DESCRIBED? ZAMORA'S THE KIND OF GUY I ALWAYS THOUGHT I'D BE WITH!
I'VE JUST GOT TO FIGHT THESE FEELINGS... FOR THE HULK!


IF THERE'S ANYONE WE NEED TO GET RID OF... THE CANDIDATE IS OBVIOUS!
I CAN'T BLAME YOU. THIS WAS ALL MY FAULT. MY CURIOSITY LED ME TO HANDLE GAMMA TECHNOLOGY BEFORE I UNDERSTOOD THE DANGER.
ALL I CAN SAY IS THAT I REVERSED THE EFFECTS ON MYSELF, JUST AS I DID ON YOU. AND NOW I HAVE THE POWER UNDER CONTROL.
I'D LOVE TO CONTINUE WORKING ON THE GAMMA-POWER, TRYING TO MAKE IT SERVE OUR GOAL TO SET PEOPLE FREE... BUT IF I LET YOU DOWN...
THE STUFF IS SCARY, DOCTOR. BUT THE POWER YOU GAVE ME SHOWS THAT WE MAY HAVE THE KEY TO THE MOST POWERFUL PUBLIC INFLUENCE TOOL THE WORLD'S EVER SEEN!
KEEP WORKING, DOC. JUST GIVE US A CALL IF YOU START TO FEEL THE URGE TO TURN US INTO LAB RATS AGAIN, OKAY?
YOU'LL NEVER HAVE TO FEAR ME AGAIN.
WAIT! THOSE TWO DON'T BELIEVE IN OUR CAUSE! WE CAN'T LET THEM --
THAT'S ENOUGH, QUIRK! YOU HAVE ENOUGH IDEALISM FOR ALL OF US! BUT EVEN A STUDIO DEVOTED TO TRUTH HAS TO CUT SOME DEALS TO STAY ALIVE IN A CROOKED, MURDEROUS WORLD!
THAT'S WHY YOU'RE OUR LEADER, ZAMORA!
AT LEAST UNTIL YOU TAKE YOUR FIRST SERIOUS MISSTEP.
OKAY, ANGEL. BUT BEWARE OF MAKING ONE DEAL TOO MANY.
WHERE DO I STAND? PART OF ME WANTS TO CATCH UP TO THEM, USE MY PERSUASIVE SKILLS TO WEAVE THEIR DIFFERENT PERSONALITIES INTO A DYNAMIC MACHINE...
...BUT ANOTHER PART WANTS TO BELT ZAMORA IN THE KISSER, PULL QUIRK'S BODY AGAINST MY OWN AND SAY, "BABY, LET'S DO THIS DREAM TOGETHER -- AND LET THE WORLD TRY AND STOP US!"
AND, LORD HELP ME, I KNOW WHICH PART IS WHICH!

OFFICIAL 2099 "POSSESS THIS MESS" CONTEST!

Editor Joey Cavalieri's desk is in shambles and his latest "Out of My Head" column has been lost in the rubble! It's up to you, noble 2099 reader, to pull Joey's futuristic fat out of the fire by writing your own ultra-cool, witty-beyond-words, non-sequitur-filled, 100-word or less "Out of My Head" masterpiece! And if we decide you've got the write stuff, your sage words will be published in a 2099, comic plus you'll win the entire ever-growing mess off of Joey's desk, including:

- An original 2099 plot autographed by the writer
- Half of a stale bagel
- 2099 color proofs
- An autographed Joey Cavalieri baseball card
- Lia's pens (callously stolen from her by Joey)
- An original autographed Pat Broderick art page from Doom 2099 # 29
- Marvel toys
- X-Men 2099 Pin
- A desk calendar page featuring exclusive Joey doodles
- One stained Cavalieri coffee cup
- A first printing of RAVAGE 2099 #1

And tons more exciting mystery junk!!!

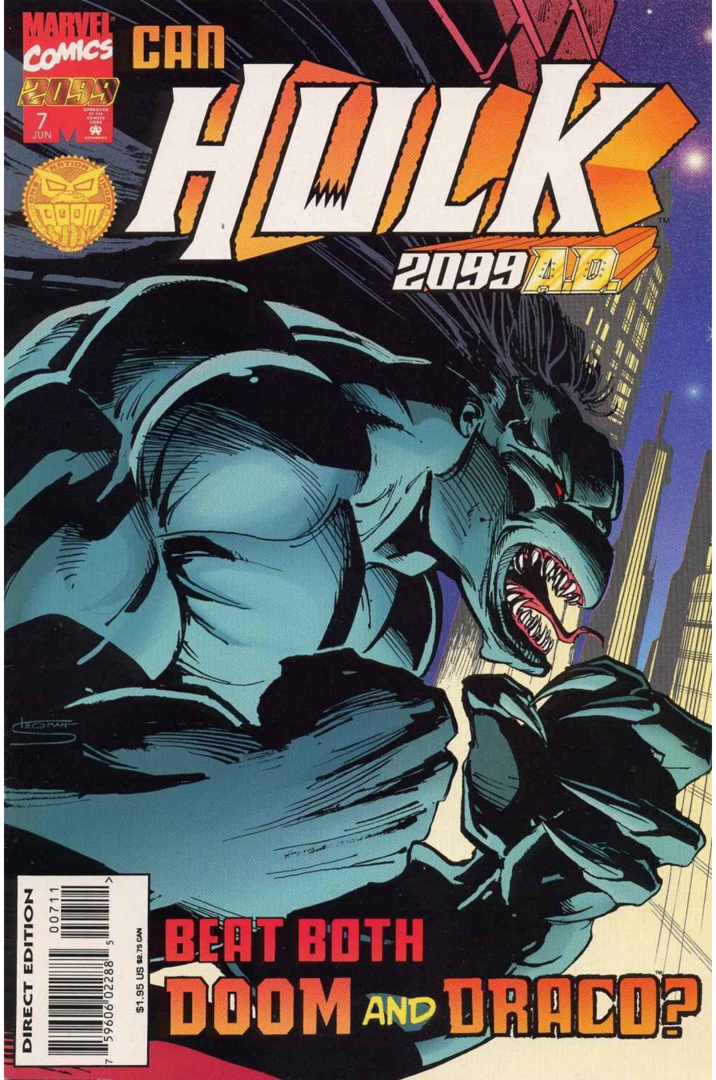
Send your entries to:

2099 Contest
c/o Marvel Comics
387 Park Avenue, South
New York, NY 10016

All entries must be postmarked by April 15th, 1995!

2099 A.D.

Legal Brouhaha Examples of previous "Out of My Head" columns can be found on most 2099 Letters Pages. All entries must be received by April 15th, 1995. Limit one entry per envelope. No purchase necessary. Print your name, age, address, city, state, zip code, and your telephone number with area code on a 3 x 5 index card. Contest open to US residents only, except employees of MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP, any affiliated companies promotional and advertising agencies and their families are not eligible. All entrants grant to the sponsors permission to use their name and likeness in advertising and promotion for the contest winners may be required to sign a publicity and liability release. All entries become the exclusive property of Marvel Comics and will not be returned. Winners will be decided on or about May 15th, 1995 and will be notified by telephone and/or/ mail. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes are offered. The prizes will be awarded in the name of the contest winners and are not transferable. Marvel Entertainment Group reserves the right to substitute any of the prizes listed at its sole discretion. Offer void where prohibited by law. MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected, or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Winners will be selected based on writing quality and originality by staff of Marvel Comics. Winners list available by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope the "Winners List-2099 Contest," c/o Marvel Comics, 387 Park Avenue, South, New York, NY 10016. Winners shall be responsible for all applicable taxes. Contest sponsored by MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP, INC. TM & © 1995 Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc. All rights reserved.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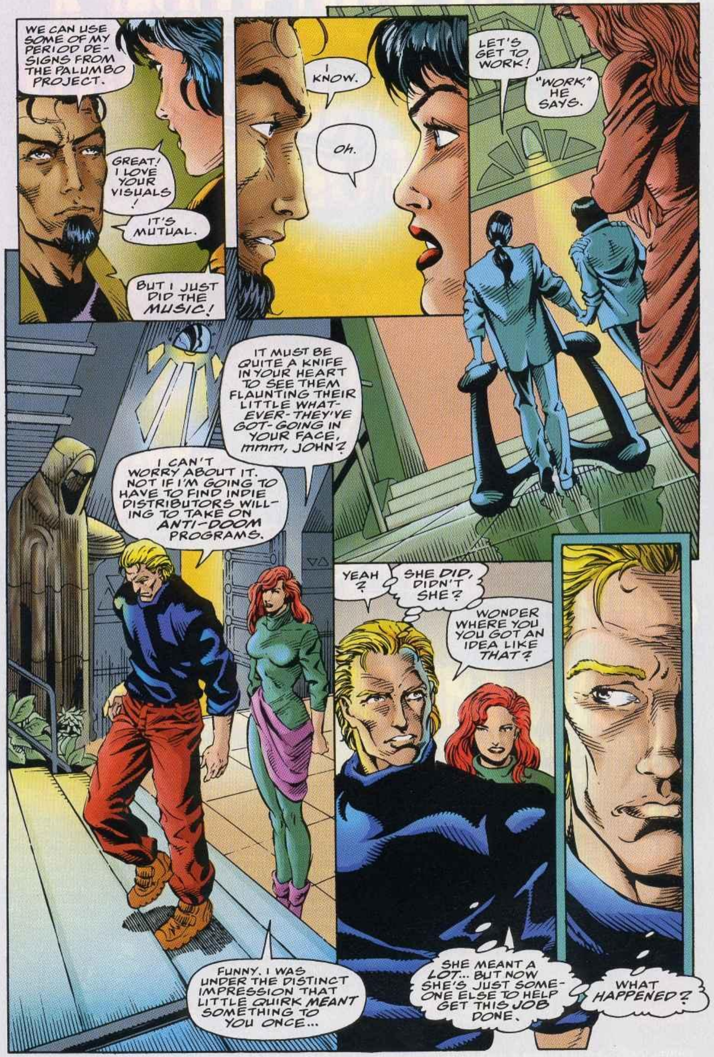
ROSA PALUMBO LED A POPULAR MOVEMENT EARLY IN THIS CENTURY TO TURN AGAINST CONSUMERISM AND GET BACK TO REAL VALUES.
"SHE EXPOSED THE MIND-CONTROL TRICKS OF THE CORPORATIONS AND FOR THE FIRST TIME GOT PEOPLE ASKING IF A WORLD THAT VALUED GOODS MORE THAN GOOD WAS REALLY MAKING THEM HAPPY.
"IT WAS AN OLD THEME, BUT THE TIME WAS RIGHT--AND PEOPLE LISTENED!
"ROSA SHOWED US HOW A TRULY GLOBAL ECONOMY THAT PUT PEOPLE FIRST COULD EVENTUALLY MAINTAIN A STABLE AND FAIR PROSPERITY. BUT RETAIL SALES WERE HURTING, AND THE CORP-OWNED POLITICIANS WERE NERVOUS...
"SO THE BIGGEST RETAIL MONSTER OF THE TIME, I.C. GOODIE'S, INVITED ROSA AND THE LEADERS OF HER MOVEMENT TO AN 'IDEA-SHARING SUMMIT' AT THEIR HEADQUARTERS...
"MYSTERIOUSLY--CONVENIENTLY--A FIRE BROKE OUT...
"IT KILLED ROSA AND HER AIDES. IT ALSO KILLED SOME OF GOODIE'S TOP EXECS, BUT MAYBE THEY WERE JUST THE ONES THE STOCK-HOLDERS FIGURED WERE EXPENDABLE.
"THE MOVEMENT LOST MOMENTUM AFTER HER DEATH... AND WITHIN A FEW DECADES THE CORP-GOVERNMENT COMPLEX WAS ABLE TO MAKE PEOPLE FORGET IT EVER HAPPENED."

YOU THINK YOU'LL BEAT THE CORPORATIONS AND STOP DR. DOOM WITH A STORY LIKE THAT?!
WE CAN SHOW PEOPLE HOW TO TAKE CONTROL OF THEIR OWN LIVES! JUST DISCOVERING PALUMBO MADE ME LOOK AT MY OWN COLLECTING IN A WHOLE NEW LIGHT!
SORRY, QUIRK... SHE'S GOT A POINT.
LATELY, YOU ALWAYS THINK SHE'S GOT A POINT! YOU USED TO SEE THROUGH HER, JOHN!
WE CAN'T WORK SLOWLY TO MAKE PEOPLE QUESTION THINGS NOW, QUIRK. DOOM RAISES THE STAKES! WE HAVE TO HIT HARD--AND STRONG!
I'LL TELL YOU WHAT WE HAVE TO DO! WE HAVE TO GET DR. APOLONIO'S MIND-INFLUENCING GAMMA-TECH UP TO SPEED--
--AND USE IT TO MAKE PEOPLE SEE WHAT WE WANT THEM TO!
NO! WE CAN'T BE THAT ARROGANT! WE'D BE SELLING OUT EVERYTHING LOTUSLAND STANDS FOR!
IF WE'RE NOT PREPARED TO BE EXTREME, WE'RE GOING TO BE CRUSHED. BECAUSE IF DOOM WANTS TO SHUT US DOWN--
--I GUARANTEE YOU A MAN LIKE THAT ISN'T GOING TO HESITATE TO BE AS EXTREME AS HE HAS TO BE!
IT COULD BE... IT'S A TOUGH CALL...
WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU? WE CAN'T DO IT!!
ABSOLUTELY NOT. WE'RE GOING TO START MAKING V.R. PROGRAMS TELLING THE TRUTH ABOUT DOOM.
QUIRK--COME UP WITH ANYTHING YOU CAN ON THE 20th CENTURY DOOM!
ALL RIGHT!


WE CAN USE SOME OF MY PERIOD DESIGNS FROM THE PALUMBO PROJECT.
GREAT! I LOVE YOUR VISUALS!
IT'S MUTUAL.
BUT I JUST DID THE MUSIC!
I KNOW.
OH.
LET'S GET TO WORK!
"WORK," HE SAYS.
IT MUST BE QUITE A KNIFE IN YOUR HEART TO SEE THEM FLAUNTING THEIR LITTLE WHAT-EVER-THEY'VE GOT-GOING IN YOUR FACE, MMMM, JOHN?
I CAN'T WORRY ABOUT IT. NOT IF I'M GOING TO HAVE TO FIND INDIE DISTRIBUTORS WILLING TO TAKE ON ANTI-DOOM PROGRAMS.
YEAH?
SHE DID, DIDN'T SHE?
WONDER WHERE YOU YOU GOT AN IDEA LIKE THAT?
FUNNY. I WAS UNDER THE DISTINCT IMPRESSION THAT LITTLE QUIRK MEANT SOMETHING TO YOU ONCE...
SHE MEANT A LOT... BUT NOW SHE'S JUST SOMEONE ELSE TO HELP GET THIS JOB DONE.
WHAT HAPPENED?

DRACO! GOOD TIMING! OUR HULK-BUSTING PLANS ARE PROGRESSING QUITE--
SAVE YOUR BREATH, GOLDEN ONE. YOU MIGHT EVEN WANT TO SAVE YOURSELF THE WORK.
OUR NEW PRESIDENT DOOM IS SUCH A THREAT TO ALL MY DESIGNS FOR TAKING POWER IN CALIFORNIA THAT UNLESS HE IS UNDONE... WE MAY AS WELL APPLY FOR CIVIL SERVICE JOBS!
CAN YOU DESTROY THE HULK NOW? BECAUSE OUR ONLY HOPE IS TO SEIZE LOTUSLAND STUDIOS IMMEDIATELY AND TAKE FULL CONTROL OF LOS ANGELES BEFORE DOOM CAN CONSOLIDATE HIS POWER IN THE WEST.
IT CAN'T BE DONE! WE'RE NOT READY! YOU HAVE TO FIND A WAY TO STALL DOOM!
REALLY? DID I MAKE AN ERROR WHEN I CHOSE TO ALLY MYSELF WITH--
BZZT
MR. DRACO! FORGIVE THE INTERRUPTION--BUT SOMETHING--A WHOLE BUNCH OF SOMETHINGS--
--HAS JUST APPEARED IN L.A. AIRSPACE?
WHAT?!
DOOM.
IT MUST BE DOOM. BUT WHAT IS HE DOING? I MUST KNOW.
PREPARE THE PROBES!

Whaat? You mean we have to do this again this month? How we continue to—Oh. Hel-lo. Didn't see you there. Nice shirt. Welcome to the 2099 Bullpen Bulletins Page. We return despite a cruel worlds best efforts to the contrary. Yeah, well, what doesn't kill us makes us stronger, so here we go.

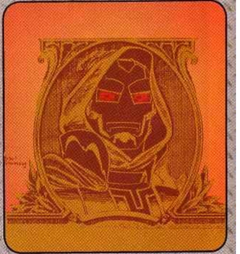
First Order of Business: For a number of reasons, none of which we're all that crazy about, Matt Morra won't be editing titles in the 2099 line for the foreseeable future...and we hope that that's a turn of events that will reverse itself in time to come. Matt'll still be around, doing a lot of advising and consulting...(like reminding Joey how to spell "Dethstryk"). Till you're back here for good, Matt, remember, this is only the end of Act 2...

Second Order of Business: You wanna know how Spidey 2099 Project X is going, do ya? Boy, there's no getting anything past you. All right, how about this? Suppose we told you that not only is Rick Leonardi busy drawing it, but our pet name for the project around here is Spider-Man Meets Spider-Man...What would you think of that?

Now remember...it's just our secret!

Third Order of Business: Is Punisher 2099 A.D., Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D. the absolute longest title you'll see on a comic book this year or what? Our especial thanks to Todd Klein, who suffered through its design and revision. The first issue with that logo invited you to join the new organization founded by Doom... and if you did, you discovered a lot of new cast members, as well as the return of some requested oldies! This month, the title develops further...and we'd hate to do it without you! Our book has always been a slightly skewed version of vigilante characters...so even if ya don't go for that sorta thing, give this book a try!

2099 BITMAPPED



Fourth Order of Business: Speaking of mail we love it! We pore through all of it! We roam and skulk the bulletin boards looking for e-mail, too! Most of what we've done in the past has been based on your comments...and we plan ahead using your suggestions and criticisms! So if you're considering writing (or posting), do it! We're listening!

More Of Marvel 2099 A.D.

Spider-Man 2099 A.D. #32: Spidey got his costume during the "Day of the Dead" festival in Mexico...and now it's that time of year again, a time to revisit a heritage!

Hulk 2099 A.D. #7: Draco's a big enough thorn in Greenskin's side! It's not enough that the villainous genius wants control of Lotusland...Doom wants it, too!

Ravage 2099 A.D. #31: Ravage, Hela, Ferra and Ursell are close to having Hellrock all sewn up...now if they could just talk Dethstryk and the Seeress off the property! Did we say "talk"? Yeah, right!

X-Men 2099 A.D. #21: Halloween Jack and Meanstreak appaently can't get enough of Vegas, and Krystalin larns what Doom has in mind for the X-Men's territory!

Ghost Rider 2099 A.D. #14: It's called "Under New Management," and truer words were never spoken! GR wakes to find Doom in charge of everything...including him!

Punisher 2099 A.D. #29 Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D.#29: Jake trains a cadre of new agents...not all of whom have his best interests at heart. Plus the return of Jigsaw!

PROJECT X

Sixth Order of Business: Yeah, so the Hildebrandts couldn't convince Joey to go visit them. (Apparently, Joey figured he was gonna fall down one of the Mines of Moria or something...) Realizing they were up against a power greater than Gollum, they came to down and dropped off the rough pencil layouts for their X-Men 2099 Bookshelf Edition entitled "Oasis." Wanna see? Ya can't. All right, maybe if you ask politely...

Fifth Order of Business: Doom's still in charge, you'll notice How 'bout those covers by Pat Broderick? How 'bout those stories by Warren Ellis, whose concepts and cool dialogue have doubled the mail on his issues? How 'bout that new cast of characters...and our creative team's twist on the old ones? How 'bout you pck it up to see what everybody's raving 'bout!

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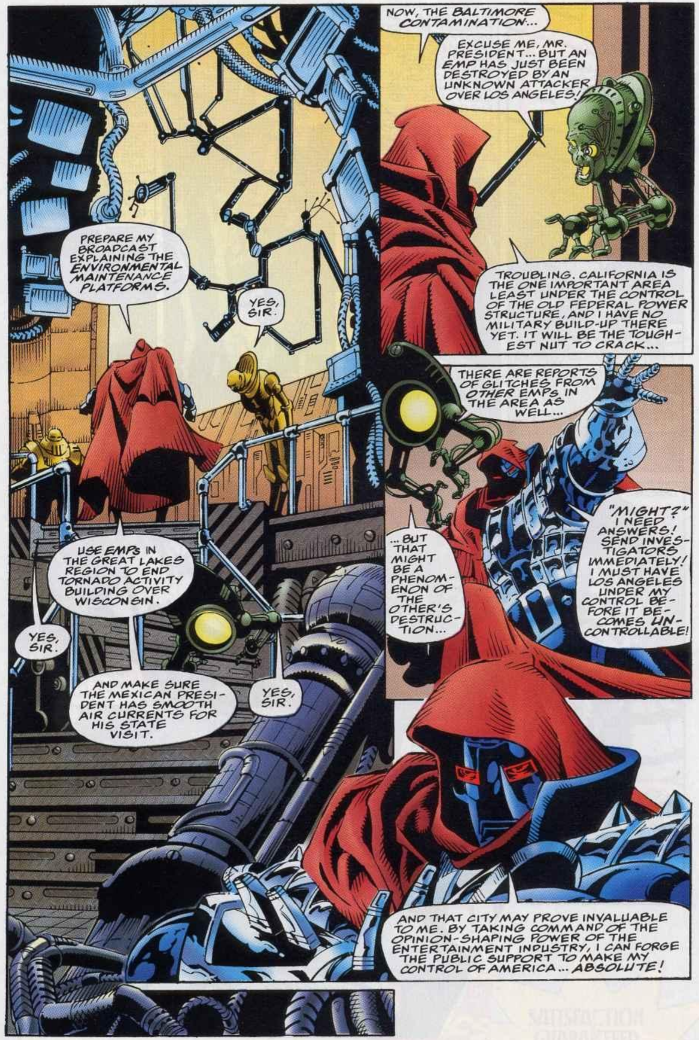
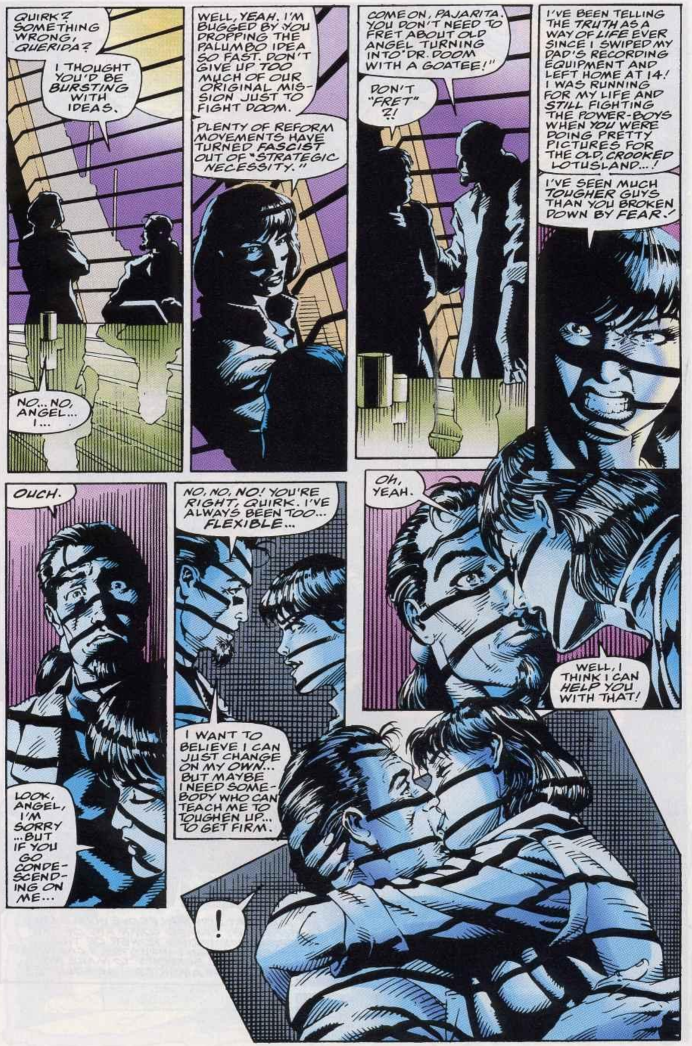
I DO A LITTLE AIR-SURFING TO TAKE THE THING AWAY FROM LOTUS-LAND AND L.A. STRAIGHT FOR THE BARREN HILLS...
I CATCH A GLIMPSE OF SOMETHING IN THE SKY-- MORE OF THESE THINGS, DOZENS OF THEM MOVING INTO PLACE...
THEN MISSILES. SOMEBODY ELSE IS SHOOTING AT ONE OF THESE FLYING SALAD CARTONS.
SUDDENLY, THEY'RE GONE. NO EXPLOSION OR SIGNS OF IMPACT. LIKE THEY JUST DISAPPEARED INTO THE THING...
I WONDER ABOUT IT...
BLOOM
BUT ONLY FOR A SECOND.

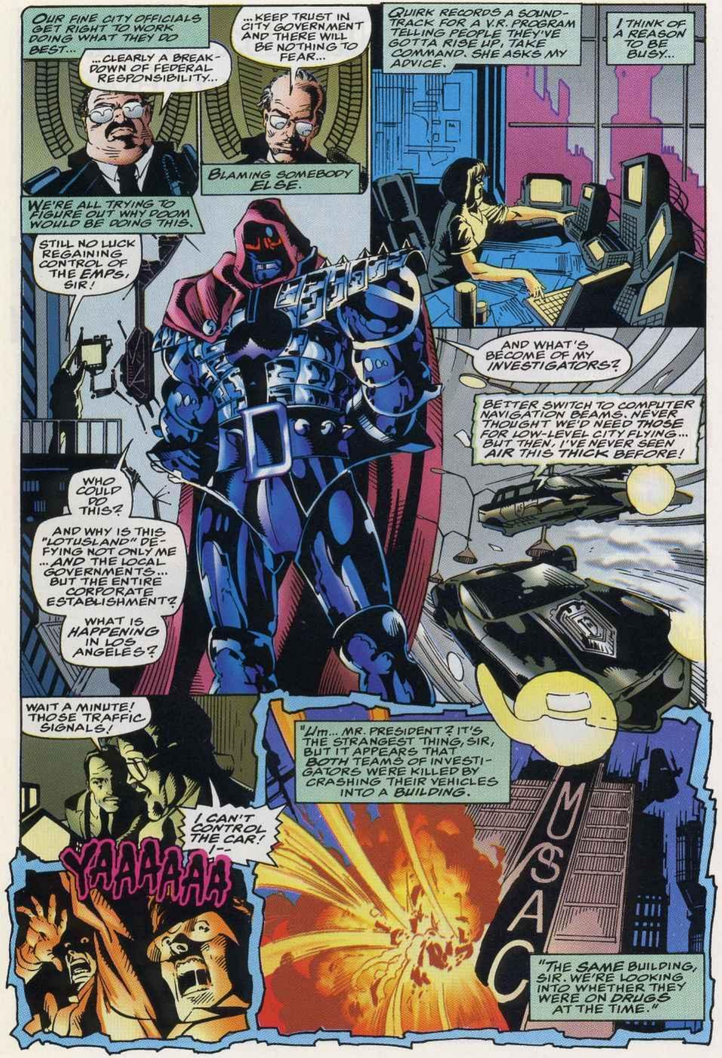

PREPARE MY BROADCAST EXPLAINING THE ENVIRONMENTAL MAINTENANCE PLATFORMS.
YES, SIR.
USE EMPs IN THE GREAT LAKES REGION TO END TORNADO ACTIVITY BUILDING OVER WISCONSIN.
YES, SIR.
AND MAKE SURE THE MEXICAN PRESIDENT HAS SMOOTH AIR CURRENTS FOR HIS STATE VISIT.
YES, SIR.
NOW, THE BALTIMORE CONTAMINATION...
EXCUSE ME, MR. PRESIDENT... BUT AN EMP HAS JUST BEEN DESTROYED BY AN UNKNOWN ATTACKER OVER LOS ANGELES!
TROUBLING. CALIFORNIA IS THE ONE IMPORTANT AREA LEAST UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE OLD FEDERAL POWER STRUCTURE, AND I HAVE NO MILITARY BUILD-UP THERE YET. IT WILL BE THE TOUGHEST NUT TO CRACK...
THERE ARE REPORTS OF GLITCHES FROM OTHER EMPs IN THE AREA AS WELL...
...BUT THAT MIGHT BE A PHENOMENON OF THE OTHER'S DESTRUCTION...
"MIGHT?" I NEED ANSWERS! SEND INVESTIGATORS IMMEDIATELY! I MUST HAVE LOS ANGELES UNDER MY CONTROL BEFORE IT BECOMES UNCONTROLLABLE!
AND THAT CITY MAY PROVE INVALUABLE TO ME. BY TAKING COMMAND OF THE OPINION-SHAPING POWER OF THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY, I CAN FORGE THE PUBLIC SUPPORT TO MAKE MY CONTROL OF AMERICA... ABSOLUTE!


QUIRK? SOMETHING WRONG, QUERIDA?
I THOUGHT YOU'D BE BURSTING WITH IDEAS.
NO... NO, ANGEL... I...
WELL, YEAH, I'M BUGGED BY YOU DROPPING THE PALUMBO IDEA SO FAST. DON'T GIVE UP TOO MUCH OF OUR ORIGINAL MISSION JUST TO FIGHT DOOM.
PLENTY OF REFORM MOVEMENTS HAVE TURNED FASCIST OUT OF "STRATEGIC NECESSITY."
COME ON, PAJARITA. YOU DON'T NEED TO FRET ABOUT OLD ANGEL TURNING INTO DR. DOOM WITH A GOATEE!
DON'T "FRET"?!
I'VE BEEN TELLING THE TRUTH AS A WAY OF LIFE EVER SINCE I SWIPED MY DAD'S RECORDING EQUIPMENT AND LEFT HOME AT 14! I WAS RUNNING FOR MY LIFE AND STILL FIGHTING THE POWER-BOYS WHEN YOU WERE DOING PRETTY PICTURES FOR THE OLD, CROOKED LOTUSLAND...!
I'VE SEEN MUCH TOUGHER GUYS THAN YOU BROKEN DOWN BY FEAR!
OUCH.
LOOK, ANGEL, I'M SORRY ...BUT IF YOU GO CONDESCENDING ON ME...
NO, NO, NO! YOU'RE RIGHT, QUIRK. I'VE ALWAYS BEEN TOO... FLEXIBLE...
I WANT TO BELIEVE I CAN JUST CHANGE ON MY OWN... BUT MAYBE I NEED SOMEBODY WHO CAN TEACH ME TO TOUGHEN UP... TO GET FIRM.
OH, YEAH.
WELL, I CAN HELP YOU WITH THAT!
!

LOTUSLAND... AT LAST.
DIDN'T THINK MY LEGS WERE GONNA LAST... NOT AFTER THAT CRASH...
...BUT I HAD TO DO IT. HAD TO GET BACK IN TIME TO WARN...
ZAMORA AND...
...QUIRK.
FOR A SPLIT SECOND I WANT TO EXPLODE THROUGH THE WALL, POUND THAT GOAT-BEARDED LITTLE CHUMP TO JELLY.
THEN I THINK, "NO, I DON'T WANT TO. THE HULK WANTS TO."
BUT ISN'T THAT ME? ISN'T THAT THE ME I WANT TO BE?!
ISN'T IT?!

EXCELLENT.
THANKS TO THE PROBES WE FIRED INTO THESE EMPs WHILE THE HULK PROVIDED HIS UNWITTING DISTRACTION, I NOW HAVE ALL THE DATA I NEED TO CONTROL THEM, AT LEAST WITHIN THE IMMEDIATE BROADCAST AREA.
PRESIDENT DOOM HAS DONE A FINE JOB CONQUERING CYBERSPACE THROUGHOUT AMERICA, BUT I STILL HAVE WAYS OF CLOAKING MY ACTIVITIES...
I CAN RECALIBRATE THESE PLATFORMS AND THUS FORCE BOTH MY ENEMIES' HANDS!
"OF COURSE THIS WILL KILL MANY THOUSANDS OF OUR FELLOW CITIZENS, BUT MOSTLY ONLY CHILDREN AND THE ELDERLY.
"IT WILL BE WELL WORTH THE PRICE."

THE NEXT DAY IS HOT.
THE DAY AFTER IS HOTTER.
DOOM TELLS EVERYBODY THAT HIS EMP'S ARE THERE TO FIX THE ENVIRONMENT, BUT IN L.A., WE'RE NOT BUYING IT. ZAMORA'S GONNA DO SOME FACT-FINDING, SEE IF DOOM'S REALLY DOING THIS ON PURPOSE.
THE THIRD DAY, IT'S NOT JUST HEAT. THEY USED TO MAKE JOKES ABOUT THE L.A. SMOG IN THE 20th CENTURY, BUT I'M BETTING IT WAS NEVER LIKE THIS.
ME, I'M JUST MAKING SURE NO MORE EMPs SHOW UP RIGHT ON TOP OF LOTUSLAND. I DON'T WANT TO PROVOKE THE BIG FIGHT WITH DOOM UNTIL I KNOW THE FACTS.
BUT IN THE MEANTIME, I DON'T WANT ANYBODY PEEKING DOWN MY BLOUSE.
THE FOURTH DAY. IT'S NOT SMOG. IT'S POISON.



OUR FINE CITY OFFICIALS GET RIGHT TO WORK DOING WHAT THEY DO BEST...
...CLEARLY A BREAK-DOWN OF FEDERAL RESPONSIBILITY...
...KEEP TRUST IN CITY GOVERNMENT AND THERE WILL BE NOTHING TO FEAR...
BLAMING SOMEBODY ELSE.
QUIRK RECORDS A SOUND-TRACK FOR A V.R. PROGRAM TELLING PEOPLE THEY'VE GOTTA RISE UP, TAKE COMMAND. SHE ASKS MY ADVICE.
I THINK OF A REASON TO BE BUSY...
WE'RE ALL TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHY DOOM WOULD BE DOING THIS.
STILL NO LUCK REGAINING CONTROL OF THE EMPS, SIR!
WHO COULD DO THIS?
AND WHY IS THIS "LOTUSLAND" DE-FYING NOT ONLY ME ...AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENTS... BUT THE ENTIRE CORPORATE ESTABLISHMENT?
WHAT IS HAPPENING IN LOS ANGELES?
AND WHAT'S BECOME OF MY INVESTIGATORS?
BETTER SWITCH TO COMPUTER NAVIGATION BEAMS. NEVER THOUGHT WE'D NEED THOSE FOR LOW-LEVEL CITY FLYING... BUT THEN, I'VE NEVER SEEN AIR THIS THICK BEFORE!
WAIT A MINUTE! THOSE TRAFFIC SIGNALS!
I CAN'T CONTROL THE CAR! I--
YAAAAAA
"UM... MR. PRESIDENT? IT'S THE STRANGEST THING, SIR, BUT IT APPEARS THAT BOTH TEAMS OF INVESTI-GATORS WERE KILLED BY CRASHING THEIR VEHICLES INTO A BUILDING.
"THE SAME BUILDING, SIR. WE'RE LOOKING INTO WHETHER THEY WERE ON DRUGS AT THE TIME."

BY THE END OF THE FOURTH DAY, THE CRACKS ARE SHOWING...
I'M FINISHED WITH YOU, ZAMORA! YOU AND LOTUSLAND! THIS "IDEALISTIC" APPROACH OF YOURS WON'T GET US ANY-THING BUT PRETTY INSCRIPTIONS ON OUR TOMBSTONES!
KEISHA-- WAIT!
WE MUST STAY TOGETHER NOW!
YEAH, RIGHT! THE ONLY ONE I NEED TO BE TOGETHER WITH IS APOLONIO. HE AND I CAN USE THAT GAMMA-TECH... WITH OR WITHOUT THE REST OF THEM!
FOUR DAYS--FOUR DAYS--AND WE CANNOT CRACK THE ALGORITHMS THAT WOULD GIVE ME CONTROL OF THE DATA-SYSTEMS OF CALIFORNIA!
CLEARLY I HAVE A FORMIDABLE OPPONENT THERE... PLAYING HIS DATA-GAMES... CONCEALING HIMSELF. I MUST GET AROUND HIM. I NEED AN ALLY THERE.
LOTUSLAND.
AND SO THE GAME NEARS ITS CON-CLUSION...
THE PIECES FALL INTO PLACE.
IT'S ENOUGH!
I'M NOT GONNA WAIT ANY-MORE! I'M GONNA SETTLE THIS!

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INTERESTING. IF I'M NOT MISTAKEN, THIS SHOULD...
Uh-oh.
TELL SEÑOR PRESIDENTE THAT I WILL BE...
MR. PRESIDENT! MR. PRESIDENT! WE'VE LOST ALL CONTACT WITH THE LOS ANGELES EMPS!!
NOW!
THE PROPULSION SYSTEM!
IT'S BLASTING DOWNWARD!
BWOOOOOSH

WE'RE GOING UP!
AND FAST. WE'VE ALREADY GONE TOO FAR TO RISK JUMPING DOWN. IF THE FALL DOESN'T KILL ME, IT'LL DEFINITELY KILL APOLONIO, EVEN IF HE'S IN MY ARMS.
I'VE BEEN TRAPPED!

TONGUE LASHINGS

Joey Cavalieri
Editor

Lia Pelosi
Assistant Editor

c/o Marvel Comics
387 Park Avenue South
New York, New York 10016

Off With His Head

By now, of course, you realize that my scheme to place Environmental Maintenance Platforms all over Lotusland was done to change the environment...of this book, so I could appear in it more often! Soon, my EMPs will cover the globe allowing me to be in every 2099 book, every Marvel title, and a few of the competition's, as well!

World domination is lonely but rewarding!

Dear Tongue Lashers,

Hulk 2099's new book is everything I hoped it would be. Gerard Jones is writing his best stories and Malcolm Davis was a great choice for penciler. Hulk 2099 has been my favorite character since 2099 UNLIMITED #1. I like the way he's so wild compared to his predecessor. What kind of eating habits does he have?

As for crossover ideas, how about Ravage or Bloodhawk? They're all ecologically interested heroes. Or maybe Hulk vs. X-Men. Although I don't like the idea of present day crossovers, I wouldn't mind a Hulk 2099 vs. Hulk grudge match.

Oh, and please give Lachryma 2099 her own book!

Until Hulk 2099 gets his own live-action TV series, Make Mine Marvel 2099.

Zack Meyman
Waseca, MN

Well, Zack, our Hulk is sort of a meat and potatoes kind of guy. And look for him to team with some other characters from 2099 to cause some real trouble.

Dear Tongue Lashers,

I just thought to drop you a letter to let you know what I think of this new hit series from Marvel. The creative team of Gerry Jones, Malcolm Davis and Chris Ivy is great.

I love this book and enjoyed the first two issues. Draco is a very cool villain, though I've got the impression that he's an updated version of the Leader.

I'll bet you'll be creating new villains in future issues. Just don't make 'em similar to today's villains in the present day Hulk book.

Marcel Hogendoorn
Hoofddorp, The Netherlands

Gerry, scratch that Abomination 2099 idea.

Dear Mean, Green and Ugly makers,

I just finished reading HULK 2099 #1. It was fantastic! The art, the story, the characters, heck, even the lettering! It was truly a relief after waiting so many months. What took ya, anyway? I knew you'd pick green metallic foil. "Gee, I wonder why?"

Will Hulk still make appearances in 2099 UNLIMITED?

And about the 2099 SKETCHBOOK, I started collecting late and missed it. Will it ever be available again? How about if I offered you a bribe?

Well, until Hulk eats my school's cafeteria food, and turns purple Make Mine Marvel 2099!

And by the way, will Quirk ever shoot rays from her eyes (Kyle)?

Thomas "Wade" Santiago
Hollywood, FL

Here's someone who reads all the books, Joey. I have no clue what to tell him! --Lia

Ask what kind of bribe. --Joey

Dear Tongue Lashers,

First, congrats for having five of the seven monthly titles in the top 100! At the risk of sounding sycophantic, or psycho-fanatic, Marvel's futureverse is one of the best offerings on the market, in as much as contemporary issues are addressed.

One such tale was "Water God" (UNLIMITED #3), wherein Gerard Jones explores Colorado River water use rights, and the rights of illegal immigrants under the Constitutionally challenged CA Prop #187. I like stories with social consequence. Keep it up!

With HULK #3 there are eleven episodes of the John Eisenhart saga, and Gerry has developed John's character quickly without rushing the stories. Jones' and Tom Smith's work has been consistent despite there being eight artists to execute Jones' vision. The recent team of Malcolm Davis and Chris Ivy are the best yet, though I still like Dwayne Turner's work. The thing I find most interesting, if not ironic, is that the pencils and inks seem to adapt to the colors, as if Mr. Smith fills the frame and Messrs. Davis and Ivy put down the lines instead of the other way around.

I also like Hulk 2099's transformations of late, both physically, with the tongue becoming more rounded, and spiritually, through John's remorse and denial to his self-acceptance. I was saddened by Gawain's death, but recognize it as the catalyst for John's new direction. I guess altruism and nobility do rub off. Much more

On the other hand, the Human Tribe are the biggest group of morons I've ever seen in comics. At least they'll make good fodder for when Doom takes over!

On a lighter note, John and Quirk make a good couple. As detestable as Keisha is, I hope y'all don't kill her. At least let her be the architect of her own demise, or upgrade her to first class villain. Perhaps she's a mutant. I'd also really like to see John's sister, Marian, again.

Another part of the 2099 appeal is the constant references to my icons. When is Jackie O showing up? Remake Super Bowl XXIII, or why not VII, complete with a young Don Shula?

Oh and hey, read I, Robot: The Illustrated Screenplay and then answer the question, "Who's smarter, Doom or Susan Calvin?" I'm waiting anxiously for the glossy pages since they're the best for comics.

Randy Phillips
Peoria, IL

Colorado River water rights? Gee, and here Gerry was concerned he wasn't writing commercial enough...

Dear Creators of the BIGGEST 2099 characters,

I loved the first issue, but of course, I have a few questions;

1. Is Draco supposed to be the Leader 2099? It's his head that's tipping me off.

2. I missed a couple of 2099 UNLIMITEDS but how did the Hulk find Gawain?

3. Since HULK 2099 takes place in Hollywood, which isn't very far from Nevada, where the X-Men are, how about a crossover?

4. Draw the Hulk more animalistic, like 2099 UNLIMITED #1. He's beginning to look like the original.

5. I love the Hulk's spinal column!

Matthew Inglis
Port Arthur, TX

1. Nahhhhhh. 2. Gawain was a young acolyte of the Knights of the Banner, which John Eisenhart was researching. 3. Maybe. 4. Take a look at the new gamma radiated Hulk! 5. Thanks!

Next Issue

Two, count 'em, two villains menace our Hulk! Draco and the Golden One show up, so you can "Pick Your Poison!"

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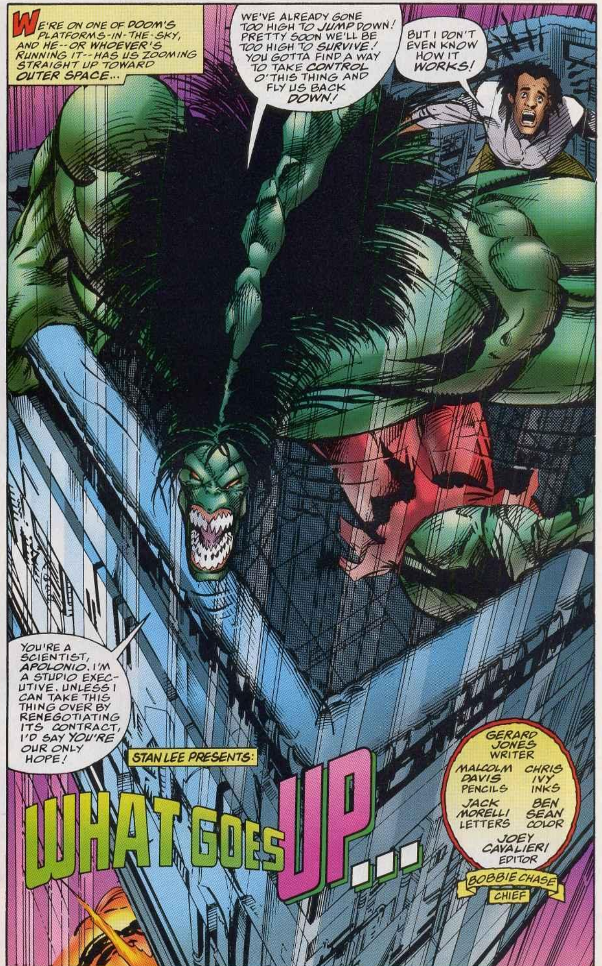

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THE HULK! GET THE HULK!
WHERE, ANGEL? WHERE?!
I DON'T KNOW! HE'S YOUR FRIEND!
WE HAVE BEEN ASSURED THAT THE HULK IS NO LONGER AN ISSUE.
NOW, COME OUT, MR. ZAMORA. MR. DRACO WOULD LIKE TO DEAL WITH YOU HONOR-ABLY... AS THE FORMER LEADER OF THE REBELLION THAT TRIED TO DEPRIVE HIM OF THIS STUDIO.
ALL OUR DREAMS... GOING UP IN SMOKE... GOTTA DISTRACT HIM FOR JUST A SECOND...
BUT WHAT GOOD WILL THAT...
TAK
?

ANGEL... YOU'VE GOT A GUN?! BUT WHAT ABOUT EVERYTHING YOU SAID-- "I'M AN ARTIST! I DON'T BELIEVE IN VIOLENCE!"
HSSSTT
I KNOW, QUIRK. BUT I'M LEARN-ING THAT WHEN YOU'RE FIGHTING A WAR FOR FREEDOM LIKE WE ARE...
...SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO DO THINGS YOU NEVER THOUGHT YOU'D DO!!
FSHOOM
CHCHOOM
BLAM
ANGEL!!
ARE YOU?! ARE YOU?!
OOHHH...
PRAISE THE LORD.

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I'M SORRY, YOUNG LADY. THE HULK IS GONE. AND YOUR LOTUSLAND TOY IS ALL MINE NOW.
THIS, THE FINAL PIECE THAT WILL ALLOW ME TO TAKE FIRM CONTROL OF CALIFORNIA AND ITS ENTIRE INFORMATION INDUSTRY. I SHOULD EVEN BE ABLE TO FEND OFF PRESIDENT DOOM NOW... WITH YOUR HELP.
NO. YOU'RE THE DREAMERS HERE!
EEEYAAAAA!
YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS WILL HELP ME AGAINST DOOM. OR YOU WILL DIE.
EVENTUALLY.
YOU'RE DREAMING, DRACO!

HULK, I...I CAN'T! CAN'T EVEN... STAND UP!
--little--
Oh, Jeez...
DOC...YOU DIDN'T SUDDENLY GAIN THE POWER TO GET ALL FUZZY AN' SPARKLY, DIDJA?
WHAT??
I DIDN'T THINK SO.
AIR'S GETTIN' TOO THIN EVEN FOR ME. GOT TO DO SOMETHING--
LISTEN, YOU POINTY-HEADED INTELLECTUAL, LITTLE--
--ANYTHING!!
buh-LANNG

SHRAXXX
HULK! DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'VE DONE? WE'LL GO INTO A FREE FALL NOW!
ACCELERATING AT A RATE OF 9.8 METERS PER SECOND SQUARED FROM A HEIGHT THAT, JUDGING FROM ATMOSPHERIC PRESSURE, MUST BE 15,000 METERS, EVEN WITH ATMOSPHERIC DRAG WE COULD HIT TERMINAL VELOCITY OF 90 METERS PER SECOND!
THANKS, DOC. THAT'S REAL HELPFUL.
THE POWER-SYSTEM!
NOW, DO YOU CALCULATE WE'LL HAVE ENOUGH TIME TO FIX THIS THING QUICK ENOUGH TO BREAK OUR FALL?
YAAAAAAAA

MR. ZAMORA! THERE'S NO USE HIDING!
PROBABLY ONLY GOT SECONDS...
...UNLESS I CAN CRAWL THROUGH THAT HOLE IN THE WALL AND DROP OUTSIDE BEFORE...
WELL? FIND THE REST OF THEM!
Oh... DIOS.
QUIRK!
I'VE GOT TO... HUH?
brt brrt brt
WHO'D BE CALLING ON MY PRIVATE LINE? NOBODY USES THAT BUT LOTUSLAND PEOPLE, AND I DON'T THINK ANY OF THEM FEEL LIKE TALKING ON THE PHONE RIGHT NOW.
UNLESS IT'S EISEN-HART... OR THE HULK... SOMEBODY WHO CAN HELP!
THIS IS ZAMORA! WE'RE UNDER ATTACK--
WHAT?! YOU'RE... WHO?!
AND YOU WANT TO TALK TO ME?!

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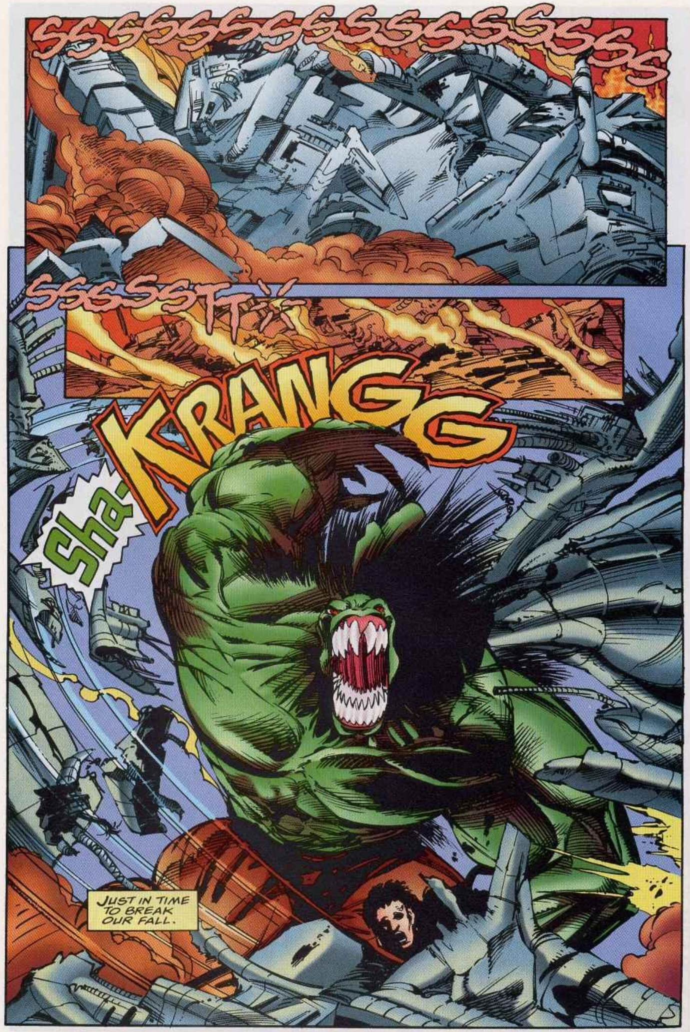
GUESS WHO?
DESTROY THAT THING!
ch-choom
I WILL TAKE THE CAPTIVES TO SAFETY!
THE ROCKETS KICK IN ABOUT FIFTY FEET OFF THE GROUND.
Buh-WHOOOOM


SSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS
SSSSSTTT
Sha-KRANGG
JUST IN TIME TO BREAK OUR FALL.

ch-ch-CHOOM
KILL HIM-- WHILE HE IS WEAKENED!!
ZZZRAKK
I AIN'T WEAKENED!
GOT NEWS FOR YOU, DRACO.
NOR AM I, HULK! YOU BEAT MY LITTLE TRICK TO GET YOU OUT OF MY WAY, BUT I STILL HAVE ENOUGH RAW POWER TO--
SHOKKK
Who?!

BY ORDER OF PRESIDENT DOOM AND THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT-- RELINQUISH YOUR CLAIM ON THIS STUDIO!
DOOM!
DOOM!
DOOM!
I KNEW THE DAY WOULD COME WHEN WE WOULD HAVE TO CLASH!!
ffsshhOWP
THAT DAY, HOWEVER, IS NOT YET! I CANNOT AFFORD TO START THE WAR HERE, UNPREPARED AND WITH MY SECURITY FORCES BATTERED.
TROOPS WITHDRAW!
SOON ENOUGH DOOM AND THE HULK WILL BE HOLDING A CONTEST-- TO SEE WHO REGRETS THWARTING ME THE MOST!
SO WHAT DO YOU WANT?!! THINK YOU CAN TAKE THIS PLACE WHERE HE COULDN'T?
WELL, I GOT NEWS FOR YOU, "GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES"...
STOP! WE COME AT YOUR LEADER'S REQUEST!
MR. PRESIDENT...?

I'M LISTENING, MAJOR...
WE ARE HERE SOLELY TO COLLECT THE GAMMA-POWERED MIND-INFLUENCING TECHNOLOGY THAT WAS PROMISED US IN EXCHANGE FOR OUR PROTECTION.
THE GAMMA--
HOW DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THAT?! WHO PROMISED YOU?!
WHY DO I HAVE TO ASK? KEISHA! I WONDERED WHAT YOU WERE DOING SNIFFING AROUND APOLONIO'S LAB, AND NOW--
W-WAIT-- NO!
I DIDN'T DO IT! I DIDN'T--
STOP!
IT WASN'T HER, HULK. IT WAS ME. I TRADED THE GAMMA DEVICE TO PRESIDENT DOOM.
ZAMORA ?!?
ANGEL... NO!

TONGUE LASHINGS

Joey Cavalieri
Editor
Lia Pelosi
Assistant Editor
c/o Marvel Comics
387 Park Avenue South
New York, New York 10016

Off With His Head

What would I, Doom, your imperious leader, possibly want with Lotusland Studios? To form the seventh network, of course! Feast your grateful eyes on my fall schedule:

MAKE ROOM FOR DOOM: Wackiness ensues when Victor's Uncle Tonoose visits, and the White House isn't big enough for both of them!
Fortune: Angela Cartwright

LITTLE DUNGEON ON THE PRAIRIE: Zaniness erupts when the girls want to torture state prisoners...but the boys would rather go bowling!
Halloween Jack: Cesar Romero

I'VE GOT A SECRET HIDEOUT: Hilarity follows when Domo waxes Doom's mask...with crazy glue!
Domo: Bob Denver

I DREAM OF CONQUEST: Nuttiness reigns when Indigo locks the keys to the thermonuclear reactor in the neighbors' centrifuge!
Indigo: Sarah Jessica Parker

And you must watch. It's the law.

Dear Tongue Lashings,

As I riffed through the pages of Hulk 2099 #1, many "first" impressions were at play in the fields of my mind. I'll limit myself to seven:

1. Many of Malcolm Davis' pencils, (the splash page in particular) are murky, "style over substance" art, like "Miami Vice" plots or the action sequences in the film "Hardware," a movie I tried hard to like. It's difficult, though, to care about the characters when the camera's eye is full of mud. Abstract expressionism looks good hanging in a museum, but I'm dubious as to how well it works in a comic—or at least this comic.

2. Keep the narration by John's Hulk-self! It works! His vantage point is unique and throws expectations off-kilter. His character seems to have more method to his madness than our Hulk used to have. He doesn't seem to hate his human half as much as our Hulk used to More resigned than condescending, perhaps this Hulk is far more ethical than his human counterpart, striking at specific targets. Our Hulk often seemed amoral and chaotic, simply striking out, not caring overmuch what he hit.

3. Flesh out the "Knights of Banner" to make their sacrifice meaningful. We don't care much about them, but we should care a great deal. They're the mythic-poetic foundation of everything that happens in HULK 2099. Without them, you go a lotta nothing much. Let there be hints of a Sacred Text used by the K.O.B. and frequently quote from it. Also, let there be some doubt as to whether all the Knights were slaughtered. Maybe a splinter group? Most important, allow that maybe, just maybe, the events leading to the origin of Hulk 2099 were no mere accident, but were foretold and orchestrated by the Knights. (The Knights should figure as prominently in this strip as the Temple and early training of Caine figured in "Kung Fu.")

4. The flying cars are cool.

5. Don't paint your villains (such as Dr. Phil) so obviously evil. If you don't occasionally lighten your portraits with shades of gray and subtler brushstrokes, all your "bad guys" will come off as cartoons. And a "hero," or even an "anti-hero," is only as good as his enemies.

6. Quirk's anything but a "helpless female." Keep her that way.

7. Your "Hostile Takeovers" are not credible. Too much property damage. Even the greedy stop short of destroying the prize they seek.

I promised to limit myself to "seven" but there's one more thing: Cover! I don't know if every picture is worth a thousand words, but this one is. WOW!
Brian Gilliland
St. Louis, MO

Brian, you've certainly given us a lot to work on, so we'll try our best. Sorry you're not a fan of Malcolm. Maybe you'll like Joe Bennett's artwork more as he takes over next ish.

Dear Joey & Lia,

Issue five was pretty good. I enjoyed seeing the painted cover by Fred Harper. It's my second favorite, next to issue two's by Adam Kubert.

1. Since March marks the "One Nation Under Doom" storyline, will the Hulk come face to face with Doom? I'd love to see those two go at it! The Hulk would give Doom the toughest time out of all the 2099 heroes.

2. Is there going to be a Draco vs. Doom story? Metal vs. metal!

3. The Hulk's transformation made him almost prehistoric. If he changes back, will it affect his humanity as well?

4. Is Quirk ever going to get super powers?
Sarah Middleton
Overland Park, KS

Since you enjoyed our other guest artist covers, we hope you enjoyed issue #7's great cover by Larry Stroman. As for your questions, 1. It'll be a battle to rock the earth's foundation, wink, wink. 2. Actually, it's Doom, Draco and the Hulk, what more could you ask? 3. Nope. 4. Double nope.

Dear Tongue Lashings,

Great painting on the cover to issue #5! Fred Harper really made the Hulk look cool! I enjoy painted covers! Will we see more of them on this or other 2099 books for that matter?

I also noticed that you have a new colorist for this book, Ben Sean. His colors look nice against Malcolm's art. It's a lot more subtle than Tom Smith, who I also liked. But the change is definitely apparent.

Will the Hulk be friend or foe to Doom? I've read that some of the 2099 characters like the Punisher will team up with Doom.
William O'Shea
Rochester, NY

Ghost Rider 2099 #14 also had a painted cover by Fred Harper, Will, and we're planning some surprises. Tom Smith continues to apply his palette to X-MEN 2099!

Next Issue

Joe Bennett steps in to draw the return of the Locusts, and their strange leader, Adonai!! Plus, Draco, Doom and the fate of Lotusland!

2099 BITMAPPED

REALITY BYTES

Yeah, we're back. What an awesome responsibility writing our own "Bullpen Page" is! The temptation to say something stupid is terrific! Never stopped me before though, so let's just push ahead, shall we? Then, we can all look back on this and laugh...

NEW FILE SEND VIEW

FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS: As promised, here's a look at a sketch torn from the secret files of our X-MEN 2099 project! We call it "OASIS," and it's a bookshelf edition comic, fully painted by the brothers Hildebrandt, and written by John Francis Moore. This'll give you an insight into the sketch stage, how the layouts are done long before the actual painting begins! Who's the running figure? It's one of our X-Men, but it'd spoil a big story point if we told'ja who!

SECOND ORDER OF BUSINESS: Next month, we'll run a page or two of pencils from the SPIDER-MAN/SPIDER-MAN 2099 team-up we've been threatening! Normally, we kinda like to keep our universes nice and separate, with those guys over there and our guys over here, but since the book reunites the original SPIDEY 2099 team, the idea was irresistible, and we're betting you'll feel the same way!

THIRD ORDER OF BUSINESS: Our "One Nation Under Doom" badges made a hit at the New York Convention! Thanx to Simon Coleby for the art!

FOURTH ORDER OF BUSINESS: While we're thinking about it, write and tell us how you liked STRANGE 2099!

MORE OF MARVEL 2099 A.D.

Spider-Man 2099 A.D. #33: Spidey & Strange 2099 vs. Morgue!

Hulk 2099 A.D. #8: Draco and Doom fight over Lotusland! Who would you want as a boss?

Ravage 2099 A.D. #32: Penultimate issue!

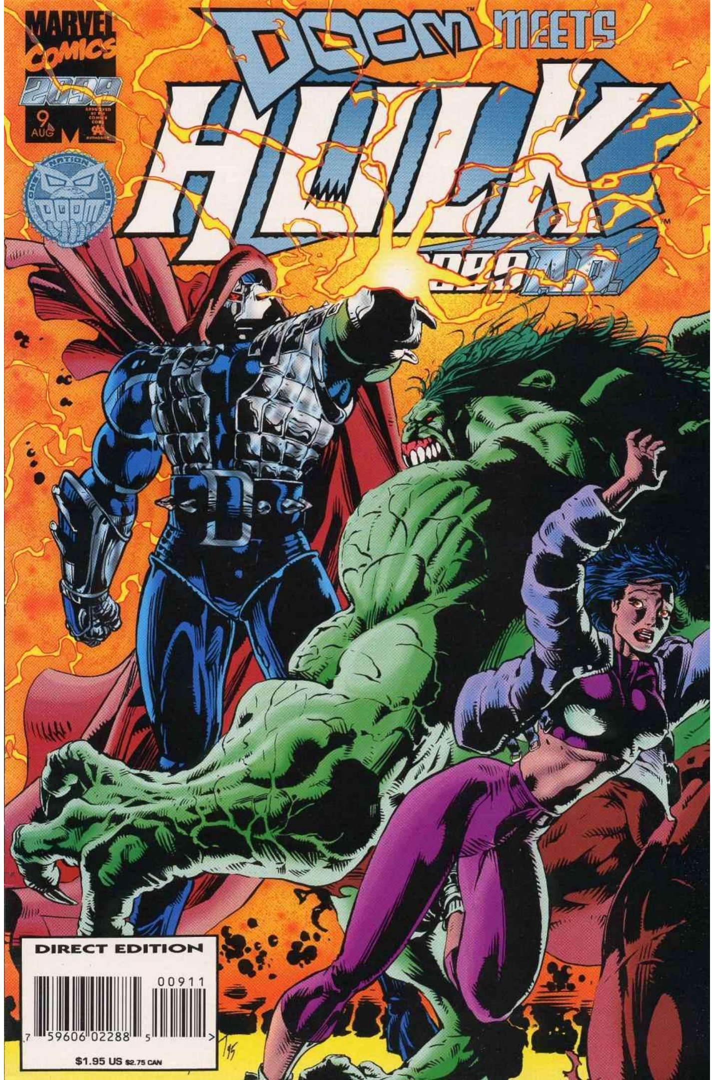
Ghost Rider 2099 A.D.#15: New artist Ashley Wood!

Doom 2099 A.D. #31: Doom kills Avatarr! No, really!

X-Men 2099 A.D. #22: Xi'an joins the Theatre of Pain! The dues are outrageous!

Punisher 2099 A.D. Agent of SHIELD #30: Chuck Dixon takes over!

2099 Unlimited #9: Spidey! And new character Steel Rain!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THE STUFF THAT DREAMS ARE MADE OF.
FOR OVER A CENTURY THERE WAS A PLACE CALLED HOLLYWOOD-- MORE AN IDEA THAN A PLACE--THAT LEFT AN ARCHAEOLOGY IN COSTUMES, PROPS AND SETS...
IT IS! A GENUINE MGM GLAMOUR-HAT FROM THE CLASSICAL AGE!
NOW ELECTRONICS ARE SO ADVANCED THAT THE IMAGES ARE SIMPLY CONJURED. NO MORE EMBROIDERED SILK OR PAINTED WOOD... JUST AS THERE IS NO FILM.
THIS'LL BRING ME THREE MILLION!
YOU?! I ICED THE COURIER!
BUT I FOUND HIM!
IN A WORLD OF ILLUSION THERE IS NOTHING TO YEARN FOR BUT THE SEEMING-REAL. SO PEOPLE WANT THOSE HALF-ILLUSIONS FROM THE PAST.
THIS IS HOW THE LOCUSTS LIVE. SWARMING THE UNPOLICED STREETS OF L.A., SCAVENGING RELICS, SELLING WHAT THEY CAN...
...ENSHROUDING THEMSELVES IN WHAT THEY CAN'T...
...NURSING THEIR ENVIES-- THEIR FRUSTRATIONS...
I'LL MILK THOSE STUDIO RICH-PIGS FOR ALL THEY GOT! NONE OF THEM DESERVE TO HAVE THIS ANY-WAY!
THEY DON'T DESERVE ANYTHING THEY'VE GOT! NOT MONEY-- NOT FAME!
BECAUSE ONCE--LIKE ME-- THEY ALL WANTED MORE.
YEAH-- LIKE THE HULK!
HOW DOES HE RATE ?!

THERE ARE STILL PEOPLE IN THAT IDEA CALLED HOLLYWOOD. ACTORS FOR VIRTUAL REALITY TEMPLATES... GRAPHIC DESIGNERS. "WRITERS" OF A SORT.
AND PLENTY OF ACCOUNTANTS AND LAWYERS.
ARTISTS OF THE UNREAL, ALL OF THEM. SCULPTORS WITHOUT STONE.
BUT THERE ARE NEVER ENOUGH PLACES FOR ALL THE PEOPLE WHO WANT TO BE THERE.
I WAS ONE OF THOSE WHO COULDN'T FIND A PLACE.
AN "ACTRESS," TO SURVIVE, I STRETCHED THAT DEFINITION TO ITS DEGRADING LIMITS...
...BEFORE MY BROTHER TRIED TO BAIL ME OUT. I WANTED TO GET BACK TO ACTING... DO IT ON MY OWN.
OH, I SUPPOSE MY BROTHER WOULD'VE TAKEN ME IN. THAT DIDN'T FEEL RIGHT TO ME.
NOT AFTER I'D NEARLY GOTTEN HIM KILLED FOR MONEY, AND ALL.
NO. I WAS GOING TO DO IT ALONE. EXCEPT I'VE ALWAYS BEEN AFRAID OF BEING ALONE, SO I ALWAYS END UP FALLING IN WITH THE WRONG PEOPLE...
HEEEEEE WANTS TO SEEEEEE YOU, MARIAN!
AND HE LOOKS MAAAADD! Hee hee!
LIKE THIS "ACTORS SUPPORT GROUP" I JOINED.
"A REALLY CHARISMATIC LEADER,"... THEY SAID.
LEADER OF THE LOCUSTS IT TURNED OUT.
ONCE YOU'RE IN, THEY DON'T LET YOU OUT. YOU HEAR TOO MUCH. LIKE HOW THAT FILM COLLECTING V.R. STAR REALLY GOT DISMEMBERED FOR INSTANCE.
YOU'RE CAUGHT.
ARE YOU READY TO TELL ME YOUR LITTLE SECRETS, NOW?
CAUGHT BY HIM.

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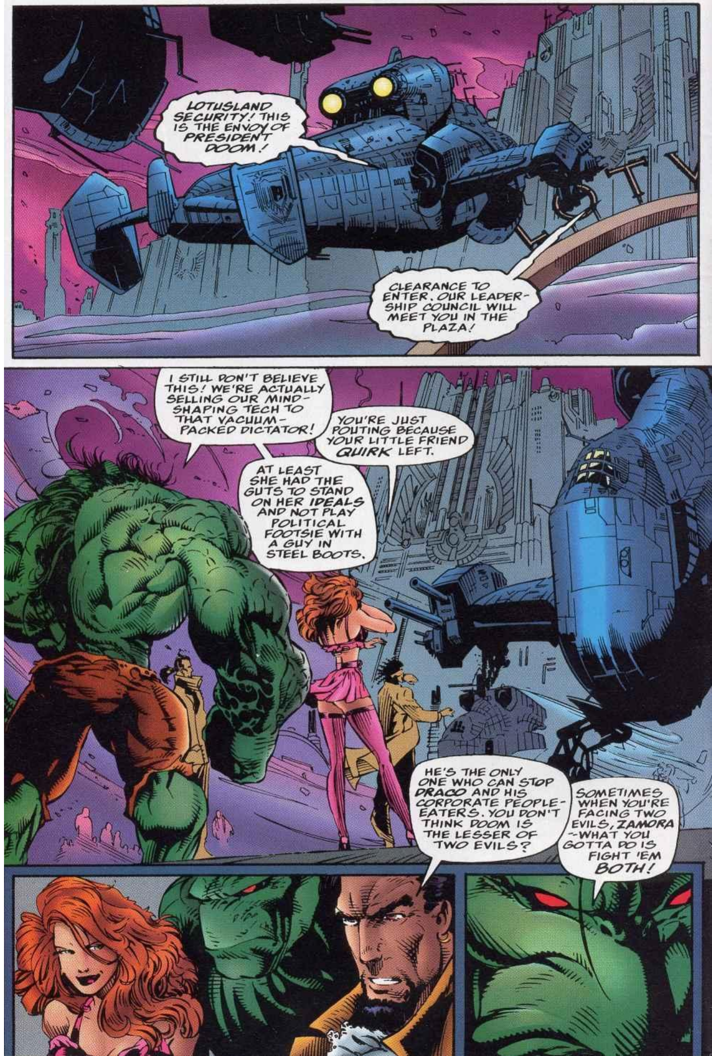
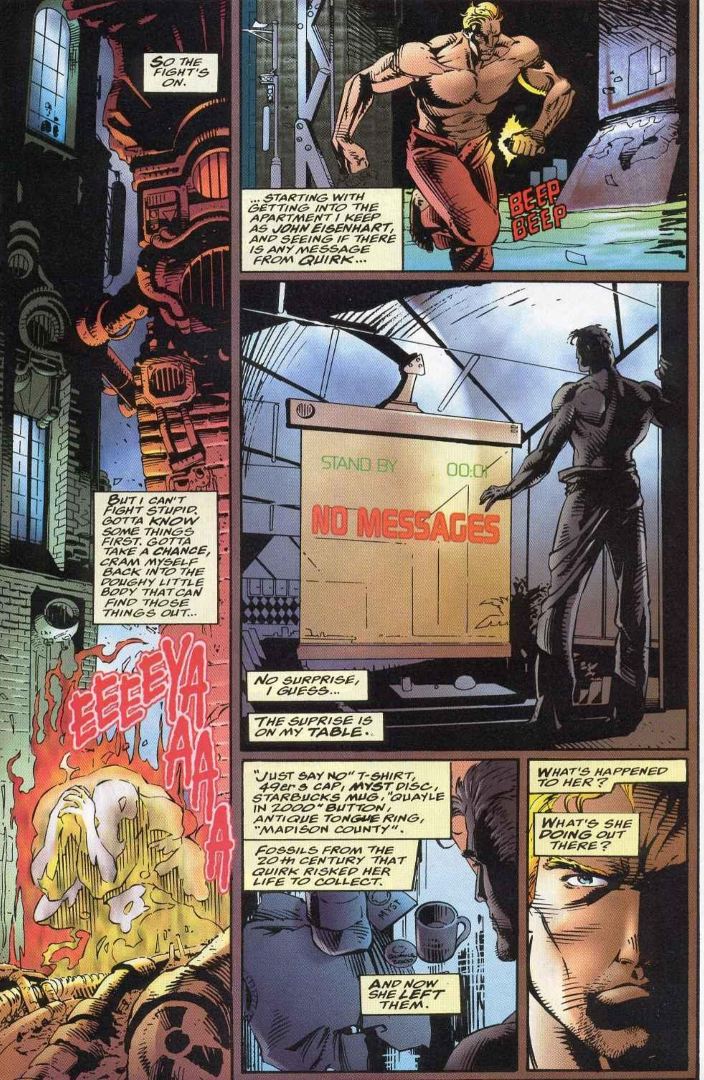


ZAMORA DOESN'T ANSWER. I THINK HE REALLY BELIEVES HE CAN WIN THIS GAME...
WELCOME TO LOTUSLAND. WHO WILL I BE DEALING WITH HERE?
NONE OF US... UNLESS THE NEGOTIATIONS GO BAD. YOU'LL BE DEALING DIRECTLY WITH...
PRESIDENT DOOM!
GIVEN THE IMPORTANCE --AND THE SECRECY-- OF THE TECHNOLOGY YOU'RE OFFERING, I WILL NEED TO INSPECT IT PERSONALLY. WHICH OF YOU IS DR. APOLONIO??
HERE, MR. PRESIDENT. AND HERE IS THE GAMMA-RAY DEVICE THAT I BELIEVE CAN BE ADJUSTED TO SHAPE HUMAN THOUGHTS AND PERCEPTIONS...
HE EXPLAINS IT. THE MOST POWERFUL POLITICAL TOOL ANYBODY'S EVER HAD, AND WE'RE TRADING IT TO DOOM FOR SOME SHORT-TERM PROTECTION...
I TOLD 'EM I'D PROTECT THIS STUDIO --AND ITS DREAM OF MAKING V.R. PROGRAMS FOR FREEDOM, NOT PROFIT. I DON'T WANT TO GO AGAINST 'EM ...
BUT THE SMUGGER THAT METAL-BOY LOOKS, THE TOUGHER IT IS...
WE WILL, OF COURSE, NEED TIME AND RESOURCES IN ORDER TO FINISH THE DEVELOPMENT...
THEN I WILL PROVIDE BOTH.
WHAT?!
LIKE YOU WILL!

NOBODY'S CONTROLLING THIS STUDIO BUT THE PEOPLE WHO TOOK IT AWAY FROM THE LAST BUNCH OF BLOOD-SUCKERS!
NEUTRALIZE! NEUTRALIZE!
GYRARRH!
I JUST NEEDED THE REST TO RISE UP WITH ME -- LIKE THE LAST TIME.
SHAKA-BOOM
ZAMORA! WE CAN TAKE THESE GUYS!
rr-RAK
GUESS THIS IS WHAT I WANTED ALL ALONG...

SHIP'S WEAPONS-- EXAMPLE ONE!
ch-CHUNG
WHOOMP
HULK! HE'S BLASTING THE STUDIO! STOP IT!!
DON'T LET HIM BREAK YOU, ZAMORA!
WE GOTTA BREAK HIM!
BUT CAN YOU? CAN YOU SHATTER MY FORCES COMPLETELY??

CAN YOU PROTECT LOTUSLAND FROM ALL THAT, HULK? CAN YOU?! IF YOU CAN'T--
GET OUT!!
FURTHER ATTACK WILL BE ANSWERED BY A FULL ASSAULT. NOT ONLY THROUGH THE MILITARY BUT THROUGH ALL THE LEGAL, FINANCIAL AND CYBERNETIC CHANNELS I CONTROL. THIS STUDIO WILL CEASE TO EXIST.
YOU... SON OF A...
IF YOU CARE ABOUT THE LOTUSLAND EXPERIMENT LIKE YOU SAY YOU DO, HULK--YOU'D BETTER LEAVE NOW...
ZAMORA...
I HOPE YOU ENJOY YOUR "LESSER EVIL..."


SO THE FIGHT'S ON.
...STARTING WITH GETTING INTO THE APARTMENT I KEEP AS JOHN EISENHART, AND SEEING IF THERE IS ANY MESSAGE FROM QUIRK...
BEEP BEEP
BUT I CAN'T FIGHT STUPID. GOTTA KNOW SOME THINGS FIRST. GOTTA TAKE A CHANCE, CRAM MYSELF BACK INTO THE DOUGHY LITTLE BODY THAT CAN FIND THOSE THINGS OUT...
EEEEYAAAAA
STAND BY
NO MESSAGES
NO SURPRISE, I GUESS...
THE SUPRISE IS ON MY TABLE.
"JUST SAY NO" T-SHIRT, 49er's CAP, MYST DISC, STARBUCKS MUG, "QUAYLE IN 2000" BUTTON, ANTIQUE TONGUE RING, "MADISON COUNTY".
FOSSILS FROM THE 20th CENTURY THAT QUIRK RISKED HER LIFE TO COLLECT.
AND NOW SHE LEFT THEM.
WHAT'S HAPPENED TO HER?
WHAT'S SHE DOING OUT THERE?

SO NO MORE STUFF. I FEEL NAKED...
...BUT LIGHTER. LIKE I JUST SHED A SUIT OF ARMOR.
THE ARMOR WAS THINKING THAT ALL THAT STUFF MATTERED. THAT I COULD KEEP ALIVE A WORLD THAT WAS MORE HEROIC --OR MORE FUN THAN THE ONE THAT I'M IN.
HEY, THAT'S THE CONSUMER CULTURE, RIGHT? BELIEVING THAT MUSIC AND V.R. SHOWS AND STUFF CAN GIVE YOU A PIECE OF SOMETHING YOU'RE MISSING.
I USED TO THINK MY MUSIC MATTERED ENOUGH TO DIE FOR.
THE CORP-BOYS THOUGHT IT MATTERED ENOUGH TO KILL FOR.
FOOTSTEPS--!
WE ALL FILLED UP ON SO MUCH VIRTUAL REALITY THAT WE THOUGHT IT MATTERED.
ZIIIP
WELL, I THINK IT'S TIME TO GET BACK DOWN...
GET BACK TO REALITY.

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2099 BITMAPPED

Reality Bytes

Hear that static? They're tapping the lines! Under the reign of Doom, anything is permissible! We may not have much time to get out this transmission, so pay attention and listen to everything closely! Closely, you hear? We may not be able to repeat it! Whaddaya mean you don't hear the static? Maybe it's just my ears ringing from the Mighty Mighty Bosstones show! Never mind...let's just get on with our...

FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS: Yeah, we said that GHOST RIDER 2099 was "under new management"...now do you believe us? Get a load of this stuff! It's the work of Australian wizard Ashley Wood, who's already doing his third monthly episode of GR 2099 for us with no sign of his brush slowing down! Now, if we can just get incompetent Overnight to deliver 'em on something close to a monthly schedule...we'd only be too happy! Let's just be quiet for a moment so you can groove on the surrounding art (Then, go buy it so you can see it without these words on top of it!)

SECOND ORDER OF BUSINESS: Pop quiz time: what's wrong with this picture? Can you identify the individuals in these panels. Yes, that is J. Jonah Jameson at his cigar-chomping orneriest. But that's no spider-clone with him, and it sure ain't Venom...Yeah, well, there's no point in keeping it a secret any longer...that's our own Miguel O'Hara behind that mask...and you are looking at the real (as in "not virtual") Daily Bugle. This trip through time is coming to you courtesy of Peter David and Rick Leonardi. And as the man said as he was painting the Sistine Chapel... "It'll be ready when it's ready!"

MORE OF MARVEL 2099

SPIDER-MAN 2099 A.D. # 34: "Mr O'Hara Goes to Washington" when he gets caught in the web of DOOM!

HULK 2099 A.D. #9: Penultimate issue! Adonai! The Golden One! The Locusts! Draco! Doom! And a big green guy!

RAVAGE 2099 A.D. #33: Ultimate issue! Yes, we're killing him! Wait'll you see how!

GHOST RIDER 2099 A.D. #16: Heartbreaker's back...and she brought enough friends for everybody! Plus...more of the Undernet!

X-MEN 2099 A.D. #23: "Junkpile, Agent of SHIELD!" Plus, the gang meet Morphine Somers, Doom's main mutant!

DOOM 2099 A.D. #32: "Rise!" This issue must be seen to be believed! The title refers not merely to Doom...but to the launching of his adversary... Herod!

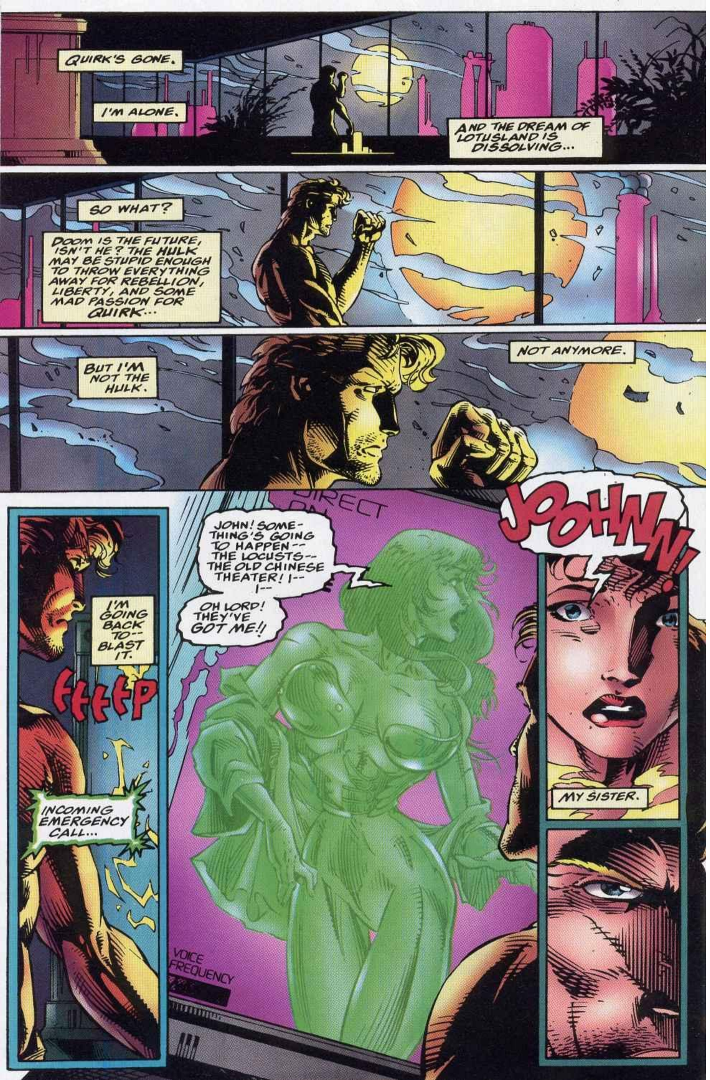
THE PUNISHER 2099 A.D, #31: While Jake Gallows has been tapped to head SHIELD by Doom, Matt Axel creates a robot Punisher!

More 2099 Stuff To Look Forward To:

The Hildebrandt Brothers X-MEN 2099 bookshelf edition! Also...what is 2099 A.D. APOCALYPSE? You'll find out! Also, it's time to campaign for the character you'd most like to see get his or her own book! What are you waiting for! Finally, the "Out of My Head" contest results!

THIRD ORDER OF BUSINESS: Who says we don't listen to the mail? Here he is, the most eagerly requested, demanded and petitioned for character of all! It's VENOM 2099, and you're staring at a cover by Rick Leonardi! By the by, the third most eagerly requested etc. is on the cover of DOOM 2099 #33. As for the second...maybe someday...

DON'T LET HIM WIN. DON'T.
LET'S GO THROUGH THIS AGAIN, MARIAN.
OUR WAY OF LIFE IS THREATENED. IT'S DOOM OR SOME-ONE ELSE, A DICTATOR WHO GAINS CONTROL OF CALIFORNIA WILL TAKE OUR FREEDOM AWAY!
BUT WHAT DID YOU DO AFTER THE HULK BEAT US? YOU LOOKED AFTER HIM... WITH LONGING AND SYMPATHY. I COULD SEE IT IN YOUR EYES!
JUST AS I SEE THE NERVOUSNESS EVERY TIME HIS NAME IS MENTIONED.
HE MEANS SOMETHING TO YOU? DO YOU MEAN SOME-THING TO HIM?
NO! WHY DON'T YOU BELIEVE ME?!
WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?
THE HULK-- WHO HAS ALL THE FAME AND POWER WE WANT, THAT WE DESERVE MORE-- IS ONE OF THOSE WHO FOUGHT US. HE BEAT US BACK WHEN WE TRIED TO TAKE OVER HOLLY-WOOD.
WE SHOULD ALL HATE THE HULK, MARIAN...
LET ME MAKE MY QUESTION SIMPLER, MARIAN.
WOULD HE CARE... IF WE KILLED YOU?!
GYAAA
THEY WANT TO USE ME...
THEY WANT TO KEEP HIM FROM INTERFERING IN SOMETHING THEY'RE PLAN-NING -- BY THREATENING ME.
I WON'T LET THAT HAPPEN AGAIN.
NO!
DON'T LET THEM.
JUST GET AWAY FROM THEM.
THERE. PAST THE CHINESE THEATER...
CHINE THEAT
THERE SHOULDN'T BE ANY LOCUSTS--
--THERE?

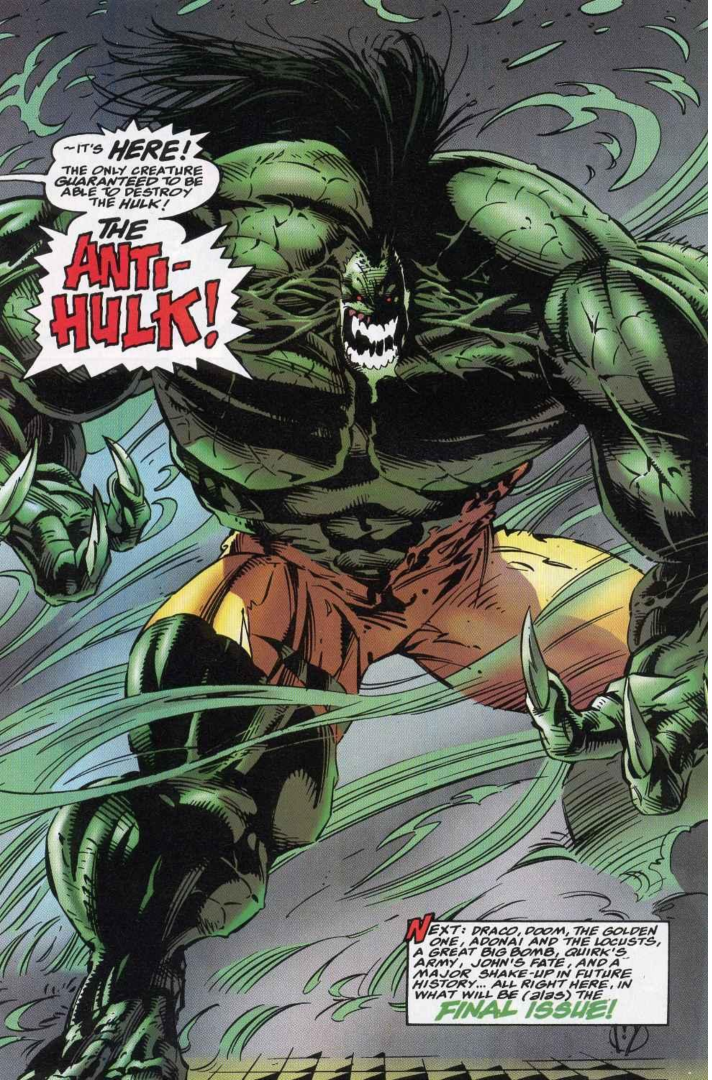

QUIRK'S GONE.
I'M ALONE.
AND THE DREAM OF LOTUSLAND IS DISSOLVING...
SO WHAT?
DOOM IS THE FUTURE, ISN'T HE? THE HULK MAY BE STUPID ENOUGH TO THROW EVERYTHING AWAY FOR REBELLION, LIBERTY, AND SOME MAD PASSION FOR QUIRK...
BUT I'M NOT THE HULK.
NOT ANYMORE.
I'M GOING BACK TO-- BLAST IT.
EEEEP
INCOMING EMERGENCY CALL...
DIRECT
JOHN! SOME-THING'S GOING TO HAPPEN-- THE LOCUSTS-- THE OLD CHINESE THEATER! I-- I--
OH LORD! THEY'VE GOT ME!!
JOOHNN!
VOICE FREQUENCY
MY SISTER.

THE HULK COULD BE THERE IN MINUTES. HE COULD TEAR THE CITY APART UNTIL HE FOUND HER.
NOTHING COULD STOP HIM. NOTHING COULD DAMPEN HIS RAGE.
YES! THE HULK!
THE MADMAN... THE FOOL... NOT ME.
NOT ME!
I CAN'T AFFORD TO GET CAUGHT UP IN ANYTHING THAT ISN'T MY BUSINESS.
LOTUSLAND STILL HAS A SHOT AT POWER AND INFLUENCE, IF WE DEAL WITH DOOM CLEVERLY.
bzzzt
CALL DISCON-NECTED!
I'M JUST GLAD I CAME TO MY SENSES IN TIME.

QUICKLY! RECHANNEL ALL POWER AND RESOURCES FROM THE STUDIO COMPLEX TO THIS LAB. NOTHING MUST SLOW THIS WORK!
CAREFUL! THESE GAMMA-COMPONENTS ARE VOLATILE! WHY DO YOU THINK WE HAD TO DO THIS HERE INSTEAD OF FLYING THEM BACK EAST ??
what have I done?
WHAT HAVE I DONE?
YOU'VE ENSURED THAT LOTUS-LAND'LL BE A MAJOR PLAYER IN THE NEW ORDER!
YOU SHOULD BE PROUD.
A MAJOR PUPPET IS MORE LIKE IT! WE'LL NEVER BE ANYTHING NOW BUT FUEL FOR DOOM'S POWER-MACHINE!
IS THERE A PROBLEM HERE? I THOUGHT WE'D ALL LIVED UP TO OUR ENDS OF THE BARGAIN.
Oh, WE HAVE! AND YOU HAVE! AND WE HAVE!
COMPLETELY!
IT'S JUST THAT MR. ZAMORA HERE... WELL... HE'S TECHNICALLY OUR LEADER, BUT HIS BACKGROUND IS IN ART. HE'S... YOU KNOW... A LITTLE TEMPERMENTAL.
I'M WHAT YOU WOULD CALL THE MORE RELIABLE TYPE.
ARE YOU NOW?
TX-1
KEISHA! WHAT'RE YOU PULLING HERE?
Y'SEE, MY BACKGROUND IS IN PRODUCTION... BUDGETS AND THINGS LIKE THAT. SO IF YOU NEED TO GET SOMETHING DONE...
JOHN WAS RIGHT! EVERYTHING FOR YOU IS ABOUT YOUR PERSONAL POWER!
AS YOU CAN SEE, HE'S ALREADY A TAD UN-HINGED!
THIS ISN'T ABOUT POWER! IT'S ABOUT FREEDOM!
NO HONEY. IT'S ABOUT MAKING THE ULTRASONIC AIR TRANSPORTS RUN ON TIME. IT'S ABOUT BEING SMART.
ENOUGH! MR. ZAMORA, I MUST HAVE YOU PLACED UNDER ARREST. IN YOUR ABSENCE I WILL DEAL EXCLUSIVELY WITH--
THAT WON'T BE NECESSARY!
JOHN--? MAN, I'M GLAD TO SEE YOU!
JOHN! HE'S GOING TO GUT THE STUDIO! KEISHA WANTS TO PLAY BALL WITH HIM! WE'VE GOT TO STOP--
PLEASE, ANGEL.
MR. PRESIDENT, I THINK THAT YOU WILL FIND THAT MR. ZAMORA WILL BE A GREAT SOURCE OF IDEAS FOR YOUR USE OF GAMMA TECHNOLOGY...

...AS LONG AS MS. SCHULTZ-VALDEZ AND I ARE GIVEN FULL ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROL OF THE STUDIO...
"...and I"?
JOHN! YOU-- TRAICIONERO!
NKH NKH
SENTRIES!
I WAS TRYING TO DO THE RIGHT THING--AND YOU BACKED ME! ALL OF YOU BUT QUIRK!
NOW I KNOW WHY! ALL YOU EVER WANTED WAS--
CHAK
I'M SORRY, ZAMORA. YOU JUST NEVER DID UNDERSTAND WHAT IT TOOK TO SURVIVE IN THE REAL WORLD.
NOW, DO WE HAVE ANY BUSINESS TO ATTEND TO?

YOU GET YOUR REST NOW, DR. PHIL. ONE THING YOU'LL FIND ABOUT WORKING WITH ME... THE MEDICAL BENEFITS ARE WONDERFUL.
NOW, IF WE'VE FINISHED OUR BUSINESS...
...I HAVE ANOTHER APPOINTMENT.
GOLDEN ONE! IT IS THE TIME YOU PROMISED ME!
I'M ABOUT TO LIVE UP TO THAT PROMISE, DRACO!
THE BRAIN-ENCODING IS COMPLETE. HE'LL HAVE NO THOUGHT BUT TO DESTROY HIS TARGET. THE REGULATORS ARE IN PLACE...
IT'S GAMMA TIME!!
SNIK!
EEEEE
YES... IT'S COMING... IT'S COMING!



TONGUE LASHINGS

Joey Cavalieri
Editor

Lia Pelosi
Assistant Editor

c/o Marvel Comics
387 Park Avenue South
New York, New York 10016

Off With His Head

New Character Sightings

Heartbreaker.......Ghost Rider 2099 #15
Vengeance 2099............GR 2099 #21
Capt. America 2099...Doom 2099 #33
Venom 2099.......Spider-Man 2099 #35
Steel Rain.................2099 Unlimited #9
Machina Jones.......2099 Unlimited #10
Anthony Herod...........Doom 2099 #32
??????????.................X-Men 2099 #29

Dear Tongue Lashings,

I'm an avid Peter David fan, as well as a fan of the Hulk. I collect SPIDER-MAN 2099 as well as HULK 2099 and X-MEN 2099 and am in general a fan of the series. And since I'm a big fan of Peter's, I'd love to see what he would do with HULK 2099. I'm not suggesting you take Gerard Jones of the book, because I like what he's done with the series, but I would like to see a Hulk/Spidey team-up/confrontation in SPIDEY 2099. I'm sure Peter would have a great time using the character and since other writers have done their takes on Spidey 2099, it might be cool to see another writer on the Hulk.

In any event, you guys are doing a really good job on the books in general. They are consistently well done.

Chris Roberts
Tulsa, AZ

We're sure Peter would have a real cool take on HULK 2099...but right now, it's all we can do to bat out SPIDEY 2099 every month, Chris! Maybe some other time! As far as a confrontation between the two heroes...we won't say what the future holds just yet!

Dear Joey and Lia,

I just finished reading HULK 2099 #7 and I must say, Joe Bennett did just as fine a job here as he does every month on RAVAGE 2099.

As for the story, I'm not sure I want to see the Hulk go the way of Ravage and metamorphose again. I mean, he's already gone under gamma radiation changes; did he really need to change even further into the big dinosaur looking creature that he became?

The supporting cast has been good, though. I enjoy Quirk and Apollo and the entire cast. I hope we get to see a lot more of them in the future. I also wouldn't mind seeing some actual filming done at the studio. The idea of futuristic movie making is cool! It would be really funny to see the Hulk sitting at a director's chair. Mostly what I'm saying is, a little more humanity would strengthen this book. It's what saved the present day Hulk, and it might just be the answer for the futuristic one.

Brian Mullen
Pittsburgh, PA

"A little more humanity, please?" Isn't that a line from a Todd Rundgren album? Glad you liked Joe's art, Brian. The changes our Hulk's going through are "no-how permanent" (to steal a phrase from Pogo). He's back to his old self!

Dear Hulksters,

Wow! This book is amazing! Everything from the artwork, right down to the lettering, HULK 2099 really packs a wallop! I must admit I never payed much attention to the character when he was in 2099 UNLIMITED, but ever since issue #1, I can't believe I missed out on it all that time. I really love Malcolm Davis' artwork, and Chris Ivy's inking is equally great. I look forward to the book every month and I'm sorry now that I hadn't been on the boat earlier, because it's been really hard finding back issues of 2099 UNLIMITED.

Anyway, you guys are doing a great job. Keep it up.

Jason Anderson
Tallahassee, FL

Jason, we're really glad you're getting such a big bang out of this book! Maybe now's not a good time to tell you that it ends with just as big a bang next ish! More about that later...but till then, good luck on your back issue hunt!

Dear Tongue Lashings,

I've enjoyed the first six issues of HULK 2099, but still I feel something is missing from the book. Looking over the rest of my comics pile, especially the 2099 one (which takes up most of the space), I realized that one of the things that I don't feel has been strongly established, and now seems to have been destroyed, was Lotusland Studios and what takes place there. I enjoy the Hulk's battles. They're drawn with great skill by Malcolm Davis, but one of the things that has been consistent throughout the other 2099 titles is the sense of place and where these characters come from. Spidey has Lyla and his home and Alchemax. I'd easily recognize these things, the X-Men have the Experience and even the Punisher has his basement jail. My problem with the Hulk is that he seems to be floating around, even during his battle sequences. The map of California helped me see where all of the action was taking place and what the area has become in its futuristic version, but I still feel as if all the action could be taking place anywhere. Develop John Eisenhart a little more. That would help the reader to understand the Hulk better.

Jonas Walsh
Ramsey, NJ

Sound advice, Jonas. We wish we could've had the chance to expand on all the characters and places that exist in the world of HULK 2099. Unfortunately, we're finishing up this run next issue so a lot of our plans couldn't see print.

Dear Tongue Lashings,

Hulk 2099 is awesome! REALLY, REALLY, REALLY! Please have him go up against another 2099 character. I'd love to see an all-out battle between him and Doom, or better yet, how about a meeting between Hulk and the X-Men. The X-Men are right around the corner in Nevada, so it wouldn't be such a long trip. The Hulk should definitely take a road trip soon. He's been in California for a long time now, shouldn't he be stomping the East Coast? Now that would be cool!

Tom Dowd
Baltimore, MD

Tom, we can grant you one wish. The Hulk indeed battles Doom,as for the East Coast, it's still a possibility...but we're not saying why just yet!

Next Issue

What is the Gamma Bomb? How will it affect the fortunes of everyone in 2099? Is even our Hulk enough to stop it?

MARVEL COMICS
2099
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HULK
2099 A.D.
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2099 BITMAPPED

REALITY BYTES

Here is the winner and the three runners-up of our 2099 "Possess This Mess" Contest. And since Joey is known for his indecision on such matters, and though I finally got him to choose one of the many great entries we received, he still insisted that we take the time to give a few honorable mentions to our other favorite entries. So here they are, the future [illegible] of America. And thanks again to everyone who sent in their columns; we got a lot of laughs at Joey's expense! —Lia

OUT OF THEIR HEADS

First Prize:

I was walking down the street the other day and I saw these two kids playing in their yard. They were running around, jumping out of trees, yelling and screaming. You know, kid stuff.

I get closer and one says, "Okay, now I'm Spider-Man and you're Hulk." They turned towards me as I passed. I smiled and said, "A little Peter Parker versus Bruce Banner?"

One kid looks at me strange and says, "Are you crazy Mister? Peter Parker, who's that? I'm talking about Spider-Man, you know, Miguel O'Hara?"

This is getting out of hand.

Scott Bauman
Marietta, GA

I was way too serious this morning. I had changed. I was crazy as a maniac at a burning house. "You're as normal as the sidewalk is everyday," my mother told me. My mother once had a boyfriend who visited burning houses, and always got there before the fire had started.

I had an urge to jump in every puddle I saw on my way to school. My teacher scolded me for being late and wet. "Announce it on a billboard," I yelled. I was in trouble if that happened again. A crazy urge was coming on.

Geoff Comer
Cincinnati, OH

Every single time I turn on the TV, the Trix commercial comes on. That has to be the crustiest commercial ever made. I hate it! The rabbit tries to eat the Trix, then the stupid kids come and take it away. It really makes me angry. I think the rabbit should beat up the kids, and eat all their cereal. The kids deserve it.

Steve Obradovich
Menomonie, WI

Things I Hate

1. People that say they collect comics and only have five to their name.
2. When people ask why comics are called comics when they're not funny. (Heck if I know.)
3. Ren and Stimpy reruns.
4. People that are cheerful in the morning.
5. People that tell you when comics were a dime.

Sarah Hosmer
Lancaster, PA

More of Marvel 2099 A.D.

SPIDER-MAN 2099 A.D. #35-Spidey vs. Venom, and the fate of Tyler Stone.
GHOST RIDER 2099 A.D. #17 L-Cypher is unleashed and GR goes home. With art by Ashley Wood.
Hulk 2099 A. D. #10-The California earthquake ends this series with a bang!
DOOM 2099 A.D. #33-With his world crumbling around him, will Doom survive the sabotage of his deadliest foe ever?
X-MEN 2099 A.D. #24- The big set-up to issue #25, as the team prepares for The Red Market and The Theatre of Pain! Don't miss it!
PUNISHER 2099 A.D. #32- SHIELD has unpleasant plans for the Punisher... his demise!

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"LOTUSLAND..."
NO ONE IS ADMITTED TO THESE GROUNDS TODAY.
I'D SUGGEST YOU TALK TO JOHN EISENHART OR KEISHA SCHULTZ-VALDEZ ABOUT THAT.
I THINK THEY'D LOVE TO TALK TO SOMEONE WHO KNOWS ALL THEIR SECRETS...
QUIRK! IT REALLY IS YOU! MY, MY!
WHAT HAPPENED? WAS THE BIG, BAD WORLD TOO SCARY FOR YOU?
WHAT DO YOU TWO KNOW ABOUT THE WORLD? YOU JUST SNUGGLE DOWN IN YOUR SLEEPING-BAGS OF LIES AND SELL-OUTS AND FEEL WARM AND SAFE...
SHUT UP, QUIRK.
WHAT'S WRONG, JOHN? DON'T LIKE BEING CALLED A TRAITOR? CROOK? SLEAZY LITTLE POWER-GRABBER?
SHUT... UP!
FIGHT IT.
DON'T TELL ME THAT MAKES YOU MAD, JOHN?
FIGHT IT. FIGHT THE CHANGE!
YES...
YES...
STUPID LITTLE GIRL? THINK YOU CAN ACCOMPLISH ANYTHING LIKE THAT?!
NO. JUST WARMING UP...
...FOR THE MAIN EVENT!

I'LL DO IT! YOU KNOW I WILL. YOU KNOW HOW MUCH I BELIEVE IN MY CAUSE. IF THIS IS THE ONLY WAY I CAN SEND A MESSAGE...
OH, PLEASE! IF JOHN HAD ANY INFATUATION FOR YOU, IT'S LONG SINCE OVER! WE'LL BOTH BE HAPPY TO SEE YOU DIE!
WHAT ABOUT IT, JOHN? ARE YOU HAPPY!?
"WHAT'RE YOU FEELING AS YOU SEE ME ABOUT TO DIE, JOHN?"
LET'S JUST GET THIS OVER WITH, SHALL WE? HERE, LET ME HELP YOU...
AARRHH!
I DON'T THINK SO, KEISHA!

John? You DO surprise me... Sometimes...
CUTE TRICK, QUIRK... PUSHING MY BUTTONS UNTIL I CHANGED.
GUESS YOU FIGURED OUT THAT ME AND JOHN HAVE BEEN COMING UP WITH DIFFERENT PERSONALITIES, LATELY.
YEAH-YEAH-YEAH. LISTEN, WE GOTTA GET OUTTA HERE! WE NEED YOU OUT THERE, HULK! WE--
I KNOW WHAT WE NEED, KID.
AND IT'S IN APOLONIO'S LAB!

JUST HOPE SURPRISE IS ON MY SIDE~
WHAM
~AND I HOPE I DON'T SET THIS THING OFF WHILE I'M HOLDING IT!
YEAH. BUT EVEN THAT WOULD BE BETTER THAN LETTING DOOM USE IT, RIGHT ??
ALERT THE PRESIDENT!
RIGHT.
ALL TROOPS! STOP HIM--BUT DON'T DAMAGE THE DEVICE!

GOOD LUCK, HULK. GOOD LUCK, QUIRK.
I'M GLAD YOU HAVE THE COURAGE, AT LEAST.
HE'S GETTING AWAY...
"...BUT NOT SOON ENOUGH."
BETTER KEEP IT LOW. DOOM'S THUGS WILL BE LOOKING HIGH.
GOTTA REACH THE DESERT. ONCE I'M THERE, NOBODY CAN STOP ME!
BUT I GOTTA GET WORD TO KWAME AND ZAMORA. WE'RE ORGANIZING A--
RRRRRRR
NO! IT CAN'T BE--!!
Huh?
IT'S MARIAN!
IT'S MY SISTER!!

QUIRK TELLS ME TO KEEP GOING. MY INSTINCTS TELL ME TO KEEP GOING.
BUT SHE'S MY SISTER.
I CAN'T LEAVE. NOT AFTER I SEE THAT SHE'S BREATHING.
HER EYES FLUTTER OPEN...
J...JOHN--AM I DREAMING... OR...
IT'S ME, MARIAN. WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU? WHO DID THIS?
TH-THE LOCUSTS, JOHN! THEY'VE GOT A BOMB AT THE CHINESE THEATER--A BOMB TO SET OFF A HUGE EARTHQUAKE! THEY'RE GOING TO RANSOM THE WHOLE STATE WITH IT!
YOU HAVE TO STOP THEM!
HULK? COME ON! WE DON'T HAVE TIME!
AN EARTHQUAKE--? HITTING THIS CROWDED AND ROTTING CITY?!
YOU CAN WARN SOMEBODY! DOOM EVEN! LET HIM DEAL WITH IT--!!
IF YOU TRY TO DO EVERYTHING--
--WE COULD END UP GETTING NOTHING DONE!
YEAH, I HEAR WHAT SHE'S SAYING...
...AND SOMEBODY LIKE JOHN EISENHART COULD GO WITH THAT KINDA LOGIC... BE PRACTICAL EVEN WITH THE VISION OF MILLIONS DEAD NOT TROUBLING HIS HEAD...
TOO BAD I AIN'T JOHN EISENHART!!
NO, HULK!!

THE HULK! THE HULK!!
TELL HIM THE BOMB IS ARMED! IF HE ENTERS THE BUILDING--CALIFORNIA WILL ROCK!
klak
NO.
THIS IS GETTING OUT OF CONTROL.
I WANT THE HULK OUT OF MY WAY--NOT THE DESTRUCTION OF THE CITY I'VE WORKED SO HARD TO CONTROL!
YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN STUPID, LOCUSTS--BUT NEVER THIS STUPID!
YOU THINK YOU'RE NOT GONNA SUFFER MORE FROM THIS QUAKE THAN THE PEOPLE YOU HATE?!
WE'LL SUFFER ANYWAY! WITH DOOM TAKING POWER, OUR LIVES ARE THROUGH! THERE'S NOTHING LEFT FOR US BUT THIS!!

DOOM?!
LISTEN--I'M GONNA TAKE THAT SECOND-RATE TIN WOODSMAN DOWN WITH MY OWN HANDS!
GET AWAY FROM THAT BOMB, AND I'LL TELL YOU--
GRRAARHH
What the--?!
FWOOOMM

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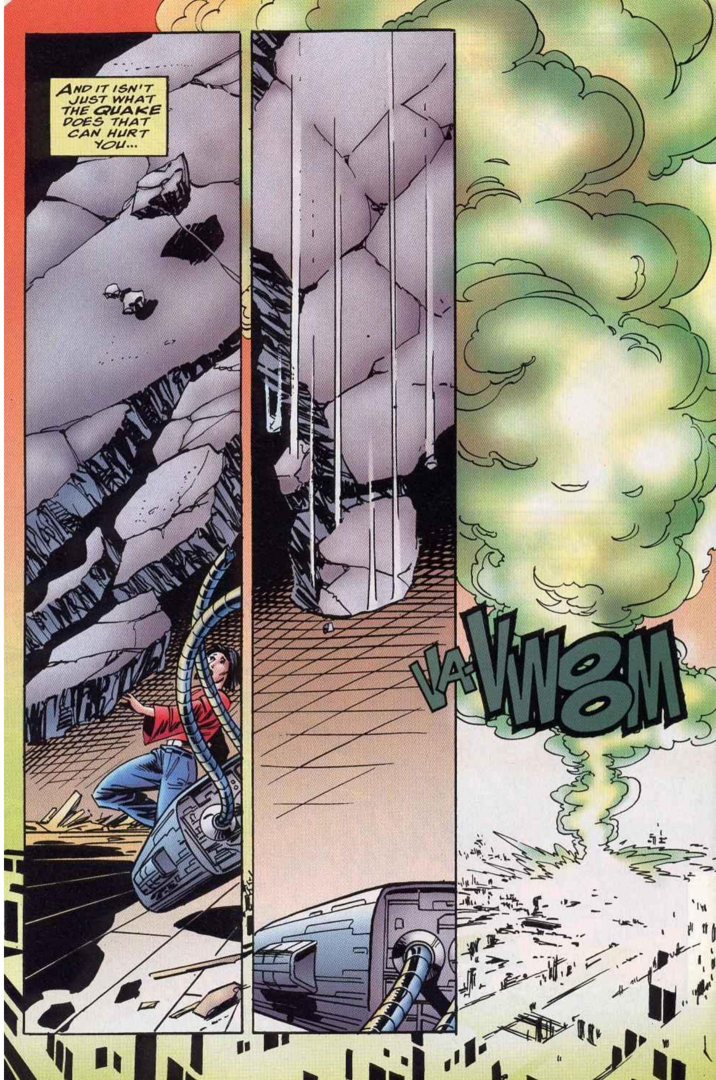
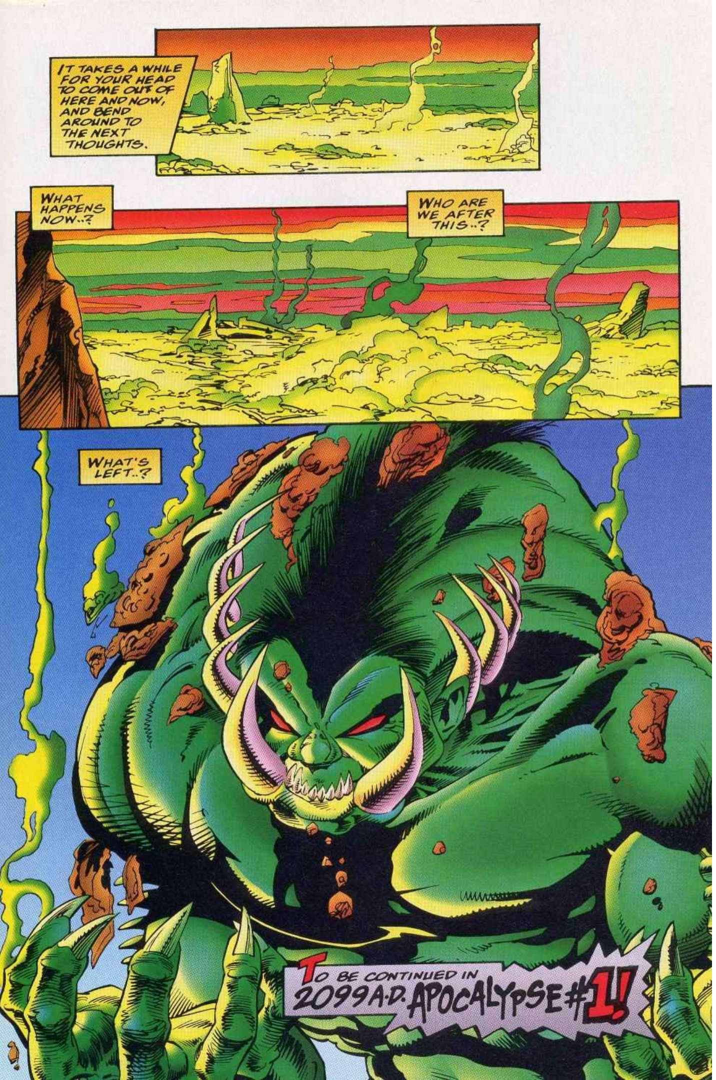
POOMF
A BLAST WAY DOWN BELOW US...
BRRRMMMM
AND THEN...
...nothing?
BA-BWAM
NO SUCH LUCK.

IT'S LIKE THIS IN A QUAKE--
QUIRK!
--YOU'RE AWARE OF THE GROUND BOUNCING UNDER YOUR FEET... AND WHATEVER'S RIGHT OVER YOUR HEAD...
IT'S OVER...
IT'S OVER...
IT'S...
SOMEWHERE IN YOUR HEAD YOU KNOW THE THING MUST BE BIG, BUT YOU CAN'T EVEN THINK ABOUT IT.
EMERGENCY SIGNALS... TRANS-MITTING TO ME FROM EVERYWHERE...
SAN FRANCISCO ...THE DESERT... THE SIERRAS...
I-IT'S THE WHOLE STATE! CALIFORNIA IS GOING TO--
NOOOO

IT'S A LONG TIME AFTER BEFORE YOU KNOW JUST HOW BIG IT WAS.
RRRRMMMMMBLLE
JUST HOW NASTY THE OLD EARTH CAN BE.
RRRUMMMBBLLE
RRRMMBLLE


AND IT ISN'T JUST WHAT THE QUAKE DOES THAT CAN HURT YOU...
VA-VWOOM



TONGUE LASHINGS

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OFF WITH HIS HEAD

The realization came late. What this book needed is that quote box that's so popular and annoying in my own book, DOOM 2099. But only with show-biz references, as befits a book set in Lotusland. So cut these out and paste them in for (what a satirical monthly used to call) use, misuse and abuse:

"Sometimes, I even annoy myself."
-- David Letterman

"I'm a loser, baby, so why don't you kill me?"
--Beck

"I'm all used up; I'm out of luck; I am starstruck by something in your eyes that is keeping my hope alive, but I'm sick of myself when I look at you. Something is beautiful and true in a world that's ugly and a lie, it's hard to even want to try."
-- Matthew Sweet

"You just want to be on the side that's winning."
--Bob Dylan

Yeah, we could have picked any line from that last source. Like the moron said when he saw Hamlet for the first time, "What's the big deal? It's just a bunch of quotes stuck together!"

Dear Mr. Cavalieri,

I apologize if this letter reaches you late, but I just heard the news that HULK 2099 has been cancelled. If this is the case, I find myself with mixed emotions about the situation.

On one hand, I've had a deep and abiding love for the Marvel heroes for going on 17 years. This is why I make sure I buy all the Marvel super hero books. As a result, I find it a shame when one of your stars tapped for solo glory falls on his or her face and gets cancelled...no matter what the circumstances.

Too, there's the fact that I always felt this Hulk had potential. Even though this was never my favorite offering from the 2099 line, I felt that given sufficient time, Gerry Jones would start telling stories that would dazzle me the way his past work has...and that he'd slowly but surely delve more into the character of John Eisenhart and his Hulkish alter ego, with the kind of characterizational magic that has made his other work enjoyable. So, the fact that now Jones won't have the chance to fulfill that potential is cause for me to miss the book.

On the other hand, for some unfathomable reason the normal Jones magic wasn't working for him as he wrote this series. I never got a sense of him having his heart in his writing; it often felt like he was just going through the motions with it. None of the primal passion one would expect from a creature named Hulk, as is evident in Peter David's work on the twen-cen version, and very little of the insightful characterization that has marked his other comics work. I don't know why that would be the case; all I know is, that's how it always felt to me. So, HULK 2099 hasn't ever been quite as satisfying as other Marvel titles, and thus, I can't really say I'm sorry to see it go.

I also regret that the book's ending on a cliffhanger, with plotlines unresolved; with any luck, presumably these'll be tied up in future 2099 UNLIMITED issues. But hey, thanks for trying!

David Peattie
Concord, CA

David, every ending's a beginning. The events of this issue will fuel further storylines in the 2099 universe, starting in 2099 A.D. APOCALYPSE this October, and its companion, 2099 A.D. GENESIS the following month.

Dear Hulk 2099,

I was surprised to hear that issue #10 will be the last for this series. I'm sorry it'll go and even sorrier that it would be able to take up again in the UNLIMITED. Though the Hulk was not my favorite 2099 character, like the Hulk of present day, I think he just needed some time before he got settled in from the "Hulk smash" cliche. It took Peter David and thirty years to get Bruce Banner over his problems, so I don't think ten issues is a fair chance for John Eisenhart. (15 if you count the UNLIMITED's).

In any event, I've read that a California earthquake or should I say, THE California earthquake is gonna knock out the Hulk. Will he be swallowed up whole? Hope not. Anyway, it was fun while it lasted. I'll still keep on top of the other 2099 titles! They're some of the best out there!

Jason Kim
San Francisco, CA

One quake already hit California, and this second is definitely the big one, Jason, but that isn't what will do in the Hulk. The story continues in 2099 A.D. APOCALYPSE as we've said. Look for it!

Dear Tongue Lashings,

I just finished reading issue #8 and the next issue box says, the earthquake is gonna hit. Does that mean that California will be totally destroyed? Hasn't California already separated from the mainland by the year 2099? What's going to happen to the west coast? Will it affect the X-Men and the Panthers?

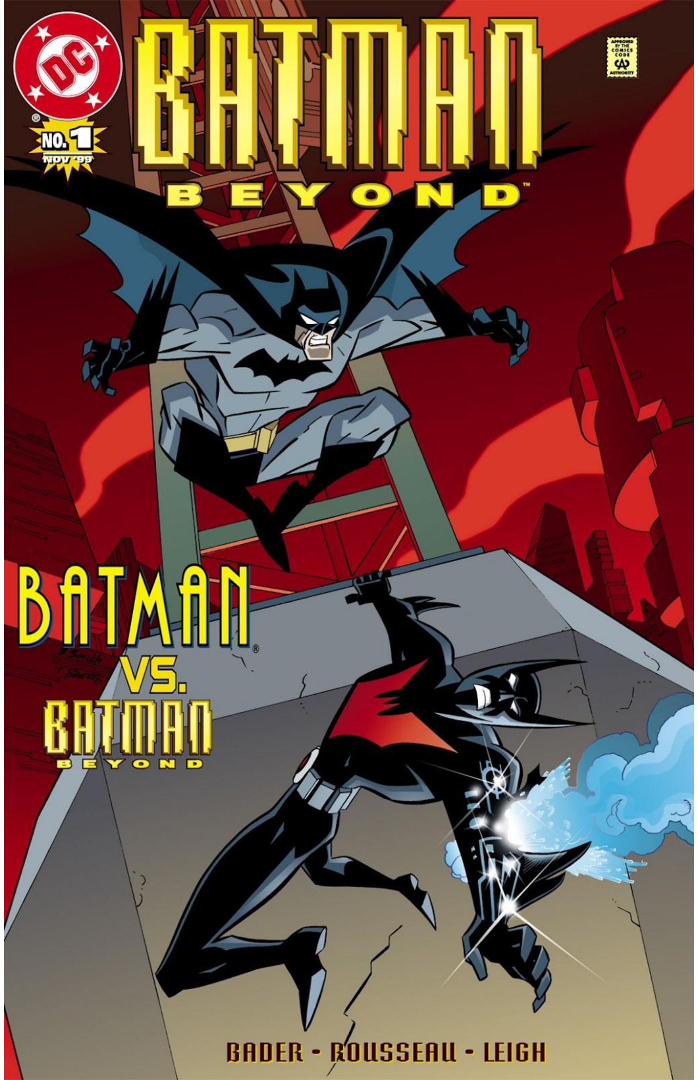
I also would like to know why Quirk and John broke up. She shouldn't be going for that creep Apollonio. The Hulk should just wring his neck. He doesn't deserve a girl as good as Quirk. And now that Doom has taken over, can't his EMPs stop the quake or did Draco mess them up too much?

Christian Walsh
Rapid City, SD

Well, Christian, there's no accounting for taste as far as Quirk's concerned. Love won't get any easier to understand in 2099, I guess. And the Hulk can't just smash anyone; that's no way to win women over! Just ask Joey. As for the earthquake, not even Doom's Environmental Maintenance Platforms can stop a natural occurrence this powerful. And yes indeed, California split from the mainland way back. This quake, however, is twice as strong and way more lethal.

NEXT ISSUE

Another episode of Cartoon Playtime has come to a close, so we'll just leave you with the words of Ed Sullivan, "We're a little late, folks, so good night and drive your car!"


DC
BATMAN
BEYOND
NO. 1
NOV '99
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
BATMAN
VS.
BATMAN
BEYOND
BADER • ROUSSEAU • LEIGH

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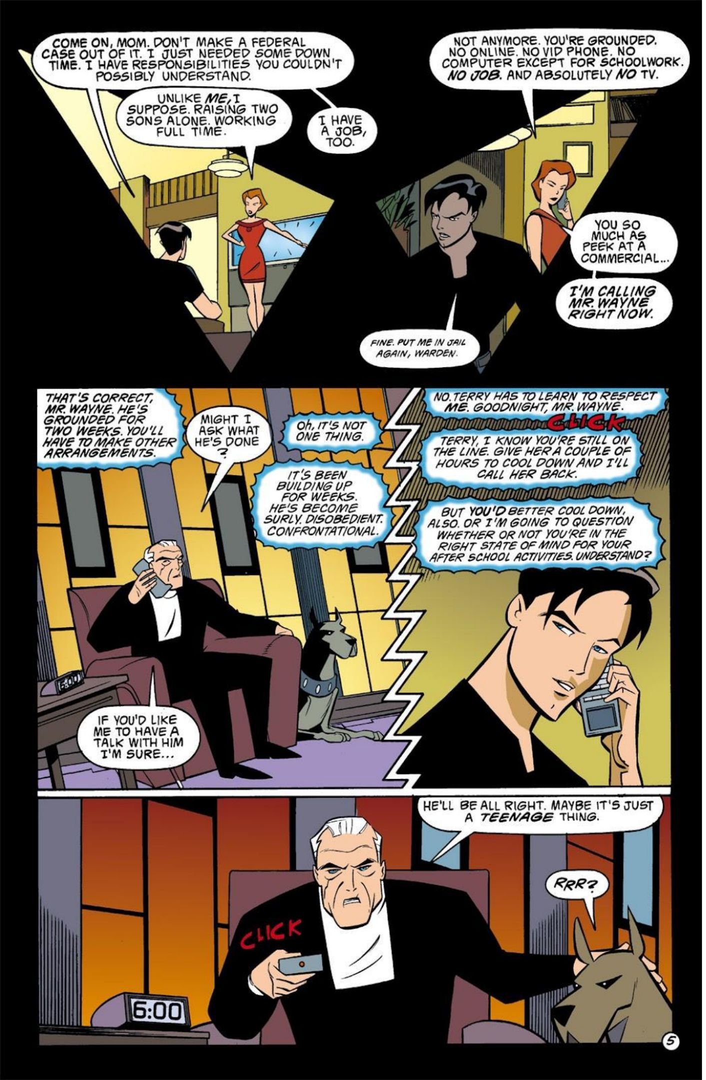
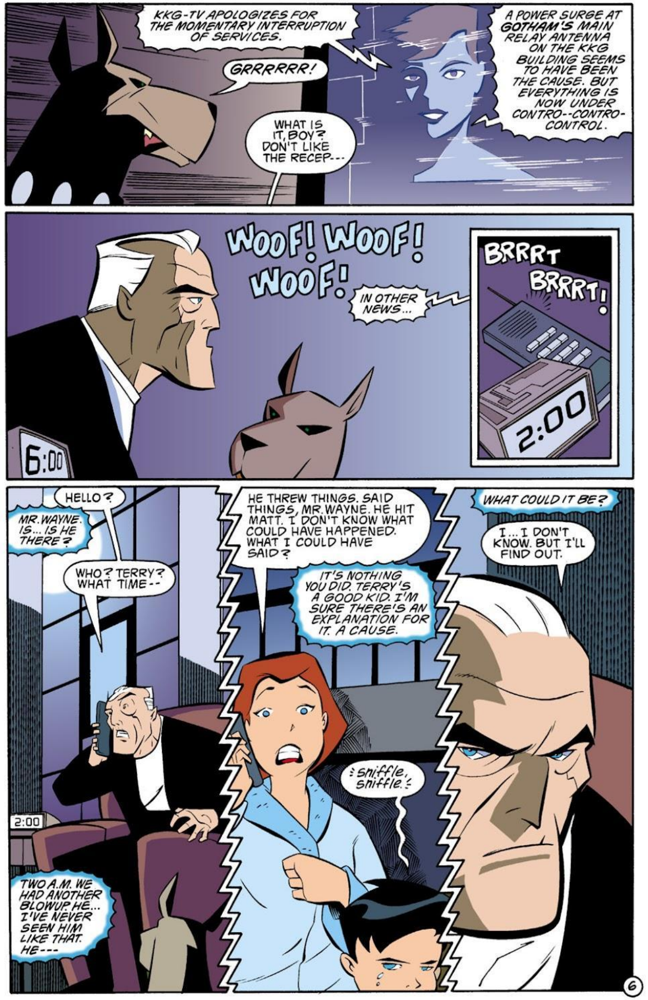
I UNDERSTAND PERFECTLY.
WHAT'S HAPPENING? I CAN'T--
YOU'RE GETTING WEAKER.
YOU DON'T HAVE THE STRENGTH TO COUNTER THE SIMPLEST MOVES.
UNGH!
I TOLD YOU, STRATEGY AND SKILL WILL BEST STRENGTH ANY DAY.
THWACK
SMACK!
I'M SORRY, TERRY. BUT THIS WAS THE ONLY WAY. IT WAS FOR YOUR OWN GOOD. YOU'LL SEE THAT WHEN YOU COME TO YOUR SENSES.
MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT.
OR MAYBE NOT.

TERRY!
TERRY. I'M NOT STRONG ENOUGH. GIVE ME YOUR OTHER HAND.
OKAY. HERE!
AHHH!
TERRY, WHY...!?
REMEMBER! GO BACK TO THE BEGINNING. REMEMBER!
"I THOUGHT I SAID I WANTED THE DISHES DONE AND THE GARAGE CLEAN BEFORE YOU DID ANYTHING ELSE.
"WHY IS IT EVERY TIME I TELL YOU TO DO SOMETHING IT'S A FIGHT?"

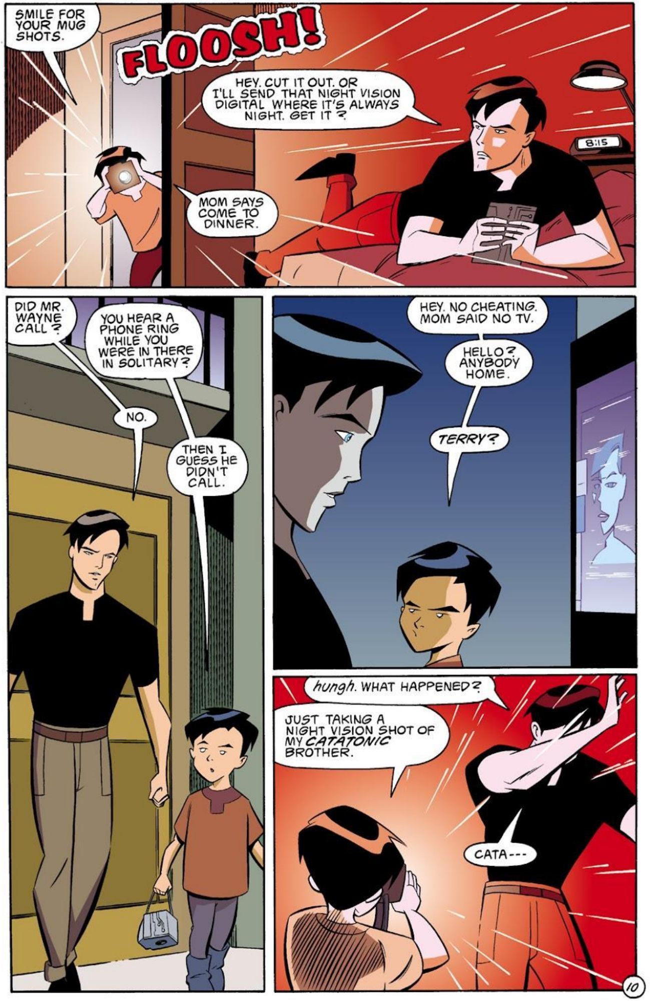

COME ON, MOM. DON'T MAKE A FEDERAL CASE OUT OF IT. I JUST NEEDED SOME DOWN TIME. I HAVE RESPONSIBILITIES YOU COULDN'T POSSIBLY UNDERSTAND.
UNLIKE ME, I SUPPOSE. RAISING TWO SONS ALONE. WORKING FULL TIME.
I HAVE A JOB, TOO.
NOT ANYMORE. YOU'RE GROUNDED. NO ONLINE. NO VID PHONE. NO COMPUTER EXCEPT FOR SCHOOLWORK. NO JOB. AND ABSOLUTELY NO TV.
YOU SO MUCH AS PEEK AT A COMMERCIAL...
I'M CALLING MR. WAYNE RIGHT NOW.
FINE. PUT ME IN JAIL AGAIN, WARDEN.
THAT'S CORRECT, MR. WAYNE. HE'S GROUNDED FOR TWO WEEKS. YOU'LL HAVE TO MAKE OTHER ARRANGEMENTS.
MIGHT I ASK WHAT HE'S DONE?
Oh, IT'S NOT ONE THING.
IT'S BEEN BUILDING UP FOR WEEKS. HE'S BECOME SURLY. DISOBEDIENT. CONFRONTATIONAL.
IF YOU'D LIKE ME TO HAVE A TALK WITH HIM I'M SURE...
NO. TERRY HAS TO LEARN TO RESPECT ME. GOODNIGHT, MR. WAYNE.
CLICK
TERRY, I KNOW YOU'RE STILL ON THE LINE. GIVE HER A COUPLE OF HOURS TO COOL DOWN AND I'LL CALL HER BACK.
BUT YOU'D BETTER COOL DOWN, ALSO. OR I'M GOING TO QUESTION WHETHER OR NOT YOU'RE IN THE RIGHT STATE OF MIND FOR YOUR AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES. UNDERSTAND?
6:00
HE'LL BE ALL RIGHT. MAYBE IT'S JUST A TEENAGE THING.
CLICK
RRR?
6:00
5

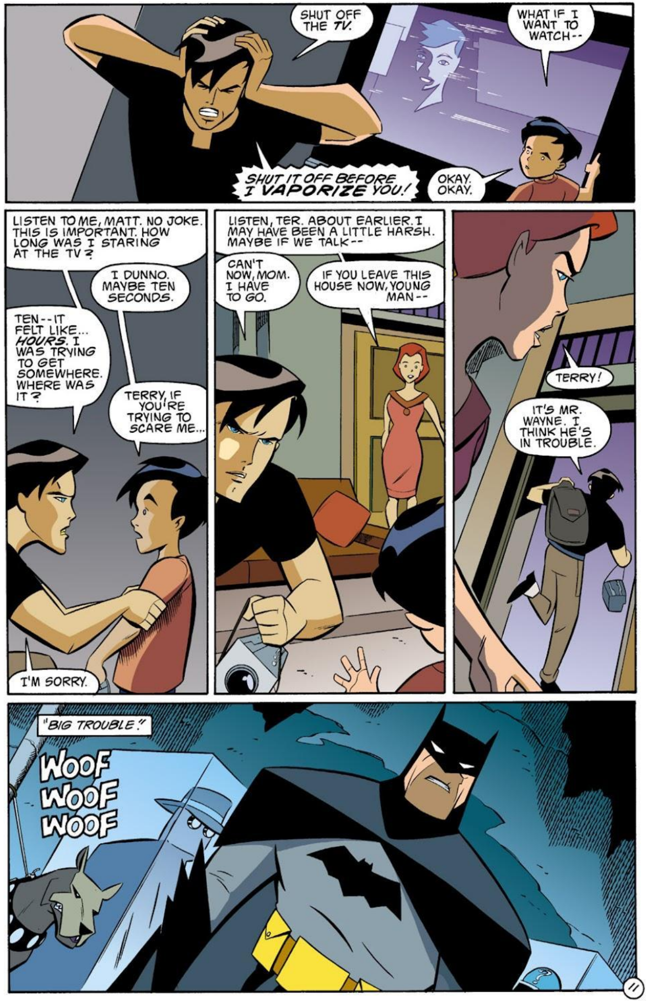

KKG-TV APOLOGIZES FOR THE MOMENTARY INTERRUPTION OF SERVICES.
A POWER SURGE AT GOTHAM'S MAIN RELAY ANTENNA ON THE KKG BUILDING SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN THE CAUSE. BUT EVERYTHING IS NOW UNDER CONTRO--CONTRO-CONTROL.
GRRRRRR!
WHAT IS IT, BOY? DON'T LIKE THE RECEP---
WOOF! WOOF! WOOF!
IN OTHER NEWS...
BRRRT BRRRT!
2:00
6:00
MR. WAYNE. IS... IS HE THERE?
HELLO?
WHO? TERRY? WHAT TIME--
HE THREW THINGS. SAID THINGS, MR. WAYNE. HE HIT MATT. I DON'T KNOW WHAT COULD HAVE HAPPENED. WHAT I COULD HAVE SAID?
IT'S NOTHING YOU DID. TERRY'S A GOOD KID. I'M SURE THERE'S AN EXPLANATION FOR IT. A CAUSE.
WHAT COULD IT BE?
I... I DON'T KNOW. BUT I'LL FIND OUT.
2:00
TWO A.M. WE HAD ANOTHER BLOWUP HE... I'VE NEVER SEEN HIM LIKE THAT. HE---
sniffle, sniffle
6

I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN. I SHOULD HAVE SEEN THE SIGNS.
SOMETHING'S SENT TERRY OVER THE EDGE. AND I'M GOING TO HAVE TO FIND OUT WHAT. FAST.
BUT FIRST I'D BETTER DISABLE THAT SUIT. BECAUSE IF TERRY IS ACTING VIOLENT OR IS UNDER SOME-ONE'S INFLUENCE, THEN SO IS--
--BATMAN!
THE BATMOBILE--
oh, no!

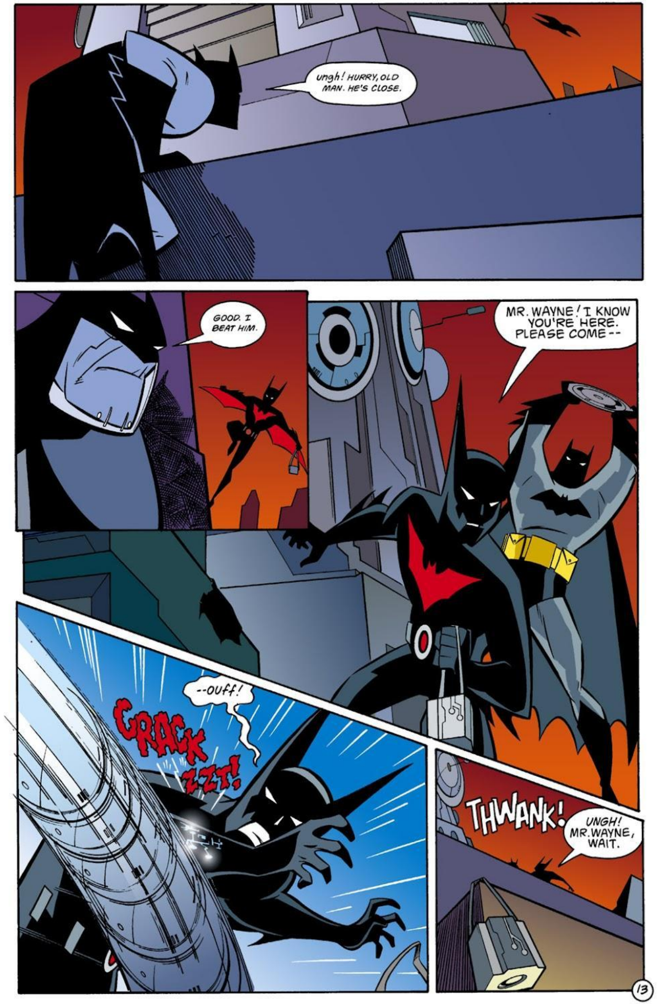
YOU GETTING THIS, BRUCE? YOU HAVEN'T GOTTEN TIRED OF THE ALL-BAT CHANNEL?
KR-SHOOM!
THAT'S WHAT YOU WAN'T, ISN'T IT, TERRY? THAT'S WHY YOU KEEP BROADCASTING TO ME?
NO FUN IN DOING ALL THIS IF NO ONE'S WATCHING, MR. WAYNE.
EVERYONE'S WATCHING. YOU'VE BEEN ON THE NEWS FOR THE PAST TWELVE HOURS. YOU'VE MADE YOUR MARK. COME HOME. LET ME HELP YOU.
TERRY, YOU'RE NOT YOURSELF.
THAT'S WHERE YOU'RE WRONG. I FINALLY AM MYSELF. I'VE FELT THIS ANGER FOR SO LONG... nrsklllll gbreeecrakle hhhcrakle vreee
...I JUST NEVER DID ANYTHING ABOUT IT. ...crakle vreee shhhhhcrakle vreee shhhhh
YOU HEAR IT TOO, huh, BOY? JUST GOT TO KEEP HIM TALKING...
TERRY, I UNDERSTAND THAT ANGER. I'VE FELT IT MY WHOLE LIFE. BUT FEELING IT AND ACTING ON IT ARE TWO DIFFERENT...
DON'T PREACH TO ME, BRUCE. AND STOP LOOKING FOR ME. ...crakle vreee shhhhhcrakle vnraaaaaa sklllll gvreeecrakle vreee shhhhh
BECAUSE IF YOU *FIND* ME, IT'LL END IN DEATH. MINE. OR *YOURS.* shhhhh nraaaaaa vnraaaaaa sklllll gvreeecrakle vreee shhhhhshh nraa

COMPUTER. REPLAY AND ISOLATE ANOMALOUS SUB-FREQUENCY IN RECORDING OF MESSAGE.
ISOLATED.
crakle vreee shhhhhcrakle vnraaaaaa skilllll gvreeecrakle
FILTER. FILTER.
crakle vreee shhhhhcrakle vnraaaaaa skilllll gvreeecrakle
SEEMS SOMEONE HAS ISOLATED THE COWL RADIO FREQUENCY AND HAS BEEN BOMBARDING TERRY WITH SOME KIND OF SUBLIMINAL SIGNAL.
COMPUTER. MATCH SUBLIMINAL SIGNAL PATTERN WITH ALL KNOWN PATTERNS. LET'S SEE WHO'S DOING THIS.
MATCH FOUND.
I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN.
SPELLBINDER.
SPELLBI DE
COMPUTER. FIND THE FOCAL SOURCE OF THE SIGNAL.
LOCATION; MAP GRID COORDINATES P4- KKG ANTENNA.
I'VE GOT TO STOP HIM. AND I CAN'T DO IT AS BRUCE WAYNE.
TONIGHT, THERE ARE GOING TO HAVE TO BE TWO OF US.
"TERRY! TER!"
9


SMILE FOR YOUR MUG SHOTS.
FLOOSH!
HEY. CUT IT OUT. OR I'LL SEND THAT NIGHT VISION DIGITAL WHERE IT'S ALWAYS NIGHT. GET IT?
8:15
MOM SAYS COME TO DINNER.
DID MR. WAYNE CALL?
NO.
YOU HEAR A PHONE RING WHILE YOU WERE IN THERE IN SOLITARY?
THEN I GUESS HE DIDN'T CALL.
HEY. NO CHEATING. MOM SAID NO TV.
HELLO? ANYBODY HOME.
TERRY?
hungh. WHAT HAPPENED?
JUST TAKING A NIGHT VISION SHOT OF MY CATATONIC BROTHER.
CATA---
10


SHUT OFF THE *TV*.
WHAT IF I WANT TO WATCH--
SHUT IT OFF BEFORE I VAPORIZE YOU!
OKAY. OKAY.
LISTEN TO ME, MATT. NO JOKE. THIS IS IMPORTANT. HOW LONG WAS I STARING AT THE TV?
I DUNNO. MAYBE TEN SECONDS.
TEN--IT FELT LIKE... *HOURS.* I WAS TRYING TO GET SOMEWHERE. WHERE WAS IT?
TERRY, IF YOU'RE TRYING TO SCARE ME...
I'M SORRY.
LISTEN, TER. ABOUT EARLIER. I MAY HAVE BEEN A LITTLE HARSH. MAYBE IF WE TALK--
CAN'T NOW, MOM. I HAVE TO GO.
IF YOU LEAVE THIS HOUSE NOW, YOUNG MAN--
TERRY!
IT'S MR. WAYNE. I THINK HE'S IN TROUBLE.
"BIG TROUBLE."
WOOF WOOF WOOF

THAT SUBLIMINAL MESSAGE ON THE TV IS COMING FROM THE ANTENNA ON TOP OF THE *KKG-TV* BUILDING.
I'M BETTING THAT'S WHERE I'LL FIND MR. WAYNE.
GASP! GASP!
GOT TO KEEP GOING, BRUCE. CAN'T GIVE UP.


ungh! HURRY, OLD MAN. HE'S CLOSE.
GOOD. I BEAT HIM.
MR. WAYNE! I KNOW YOU'RE HERE. PLEASE COME--
CRACK
--ouff!
ZZT!
THWANK!
UNGH! MR. WAYNE, WAIT.

MR. WAYNE, PLEASE. YOU HAVE TO LISTEN TO ME.
UNGH!
WHY? SO YOU CAN GO BACK TO USING WHAT I'VE TAUGHT YOU TO WREAK HAVOC ON THE CITY?
MR. WAYNE. BRUCE. I KNOW THIS IS HARD FOR YOU TO BELIEVE, BUT NONE OF WHAT YOU THINK I'VE DONE HAS HAPPENED.
IT WAS ALL A MAD HALLUCINATION. THERE WAS SOME KIND OF SUBLIMINAL MESSAGE IN THE T.V.
WAP!
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S MAD, TERRY.
...WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS? YOU CAN'T BEAT ME. I'M TEN TIMES STRONGER THAN YOU.
MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT, BRUCE...
HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I TOLD YOU...
...STRATEGY AND SKILL WILL BEST STRENGTH ANY DAY.

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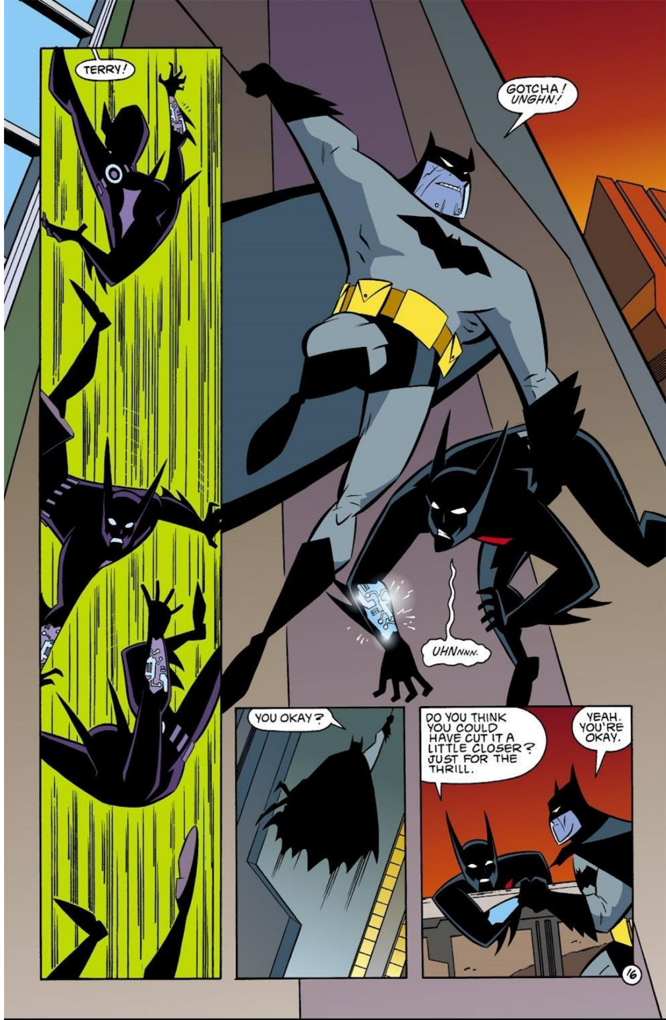

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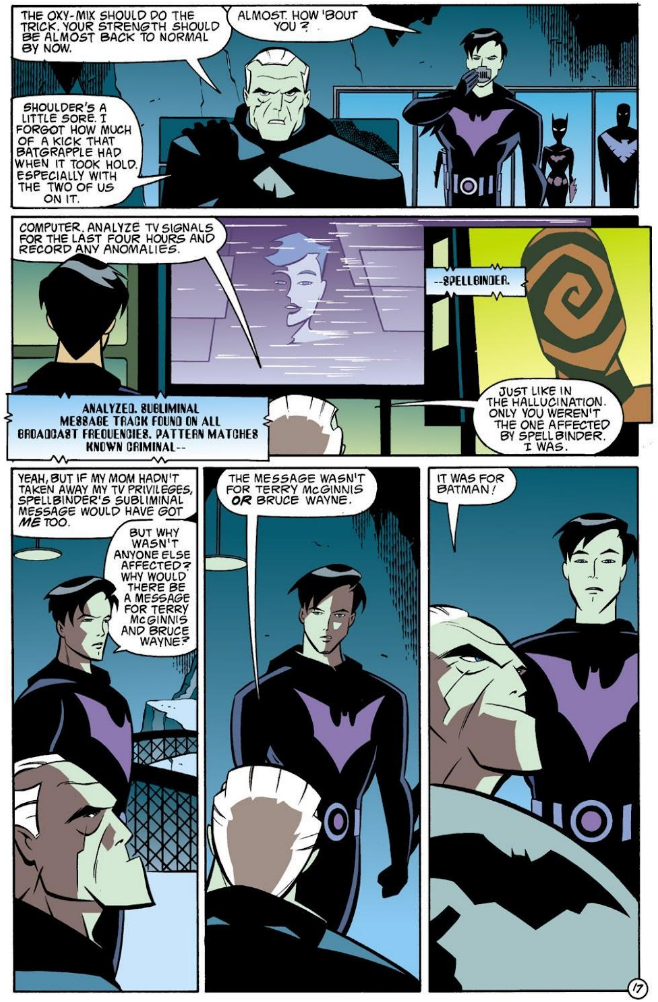
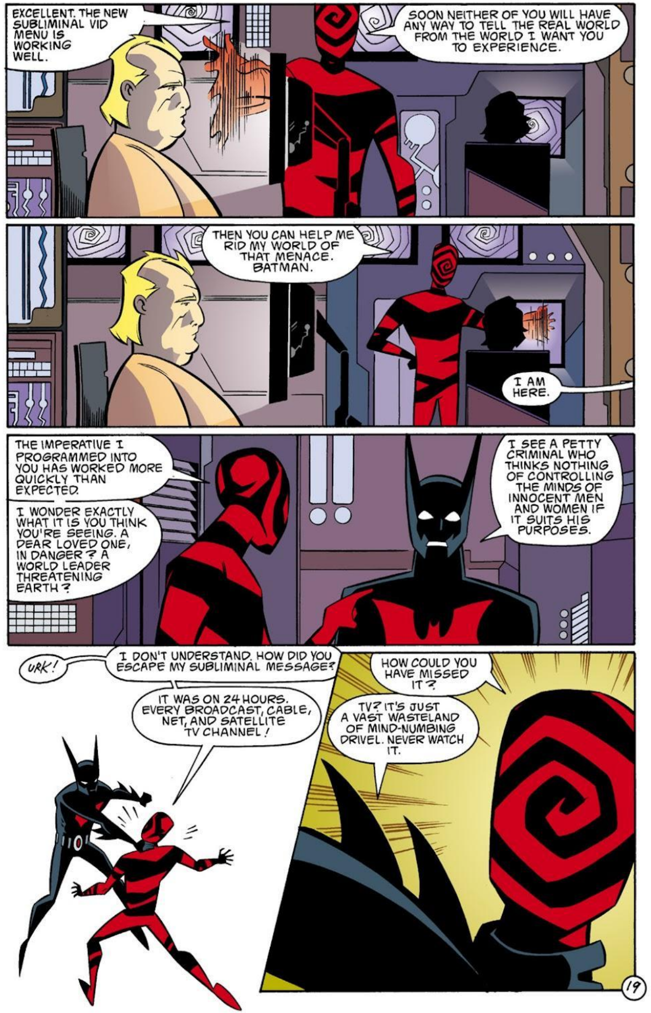
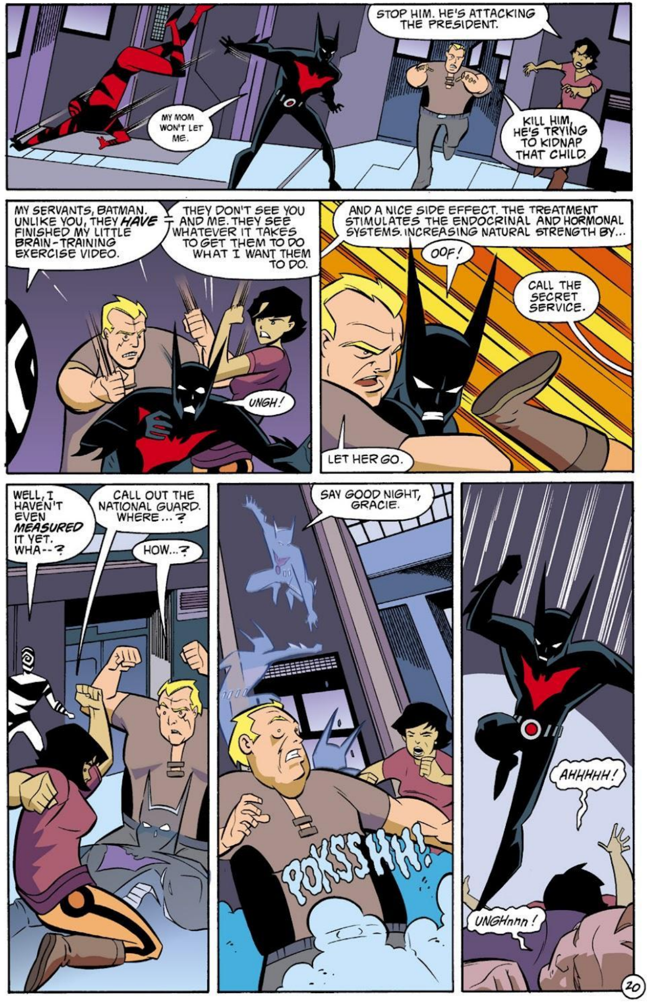
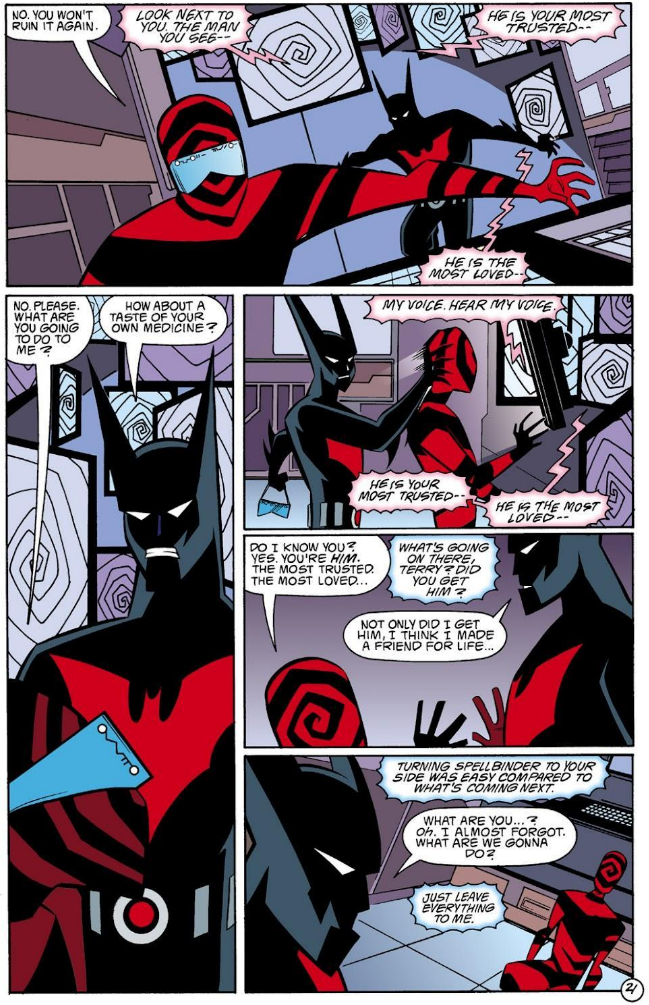
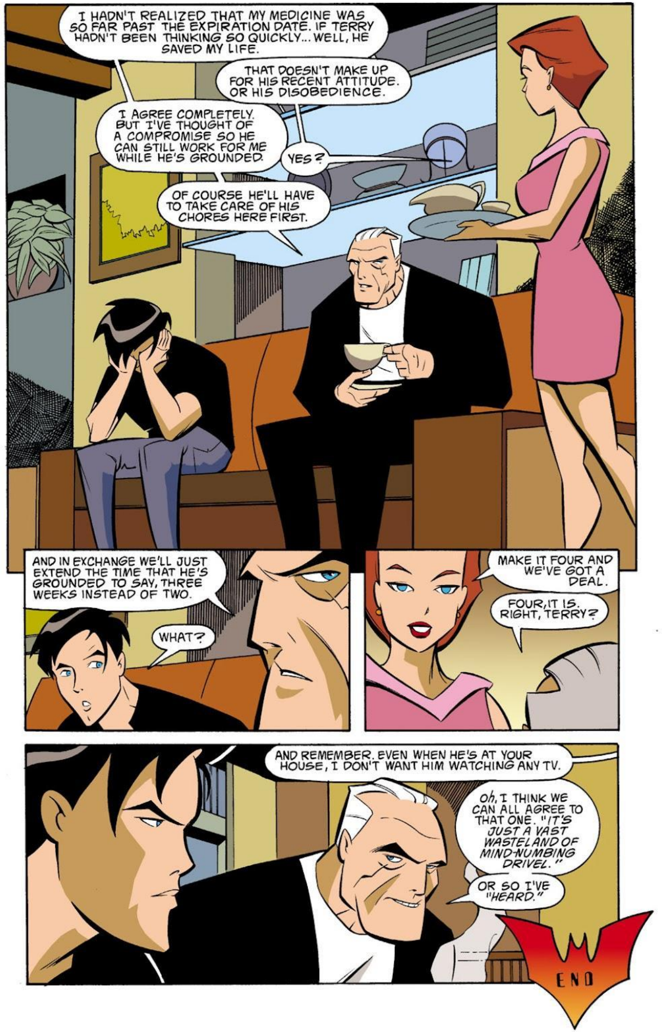

THE OXY-MIX SHOULD DO THE TRICK. YOUR STRENGTH SHOULD BE ALMOST BACK TO NORMAL BY NOW.
ALMOST. HOW 'BOUT YOU?
SHOULDER'S A LITTLE SORE. I FORGOT HOW MUCH OF A KICK THAT BATGRAPPLE HAD WHEN IT TOOK HOLD. ESPECIALLY WITH THE TWO OF US ON IT.
COMPUTER, ANALYZE TV SIGNALS FOR THE LAST FOUR HOURS AND RECORD ANY ANOMALIES.
ANALYZED. SUBLIMINAL MESSAGE TRACK FOUND ON ALL BROADCAST FREQUENCIES. PATTERN MATCHES KNOWN CRIMINAL--
--SPELLBINDER.
JUST LIKE IN THE HALLUCINATION. ONLY YOU WEREN'T THE ONE AFFECTED BY SPELLBINDER. I WAS.
YEAH, BUT IF MY MOM HADN'T TAKEN AWAY MY TV PRIVILEGES, SPELLBINDER'S SUBLIMINAL MESSAGE WOULD HAVE GOT ME TOO.
BUT WHY WASN'T ANYONE ELSE AFFECTED? WHY WOULD THERE BE A MESSAGE FOR TERRY McGINNIS AND BRUCE WAYNE?
THE MESSAGE WASN'T FOR TERRY McGINNIS OR BRUCE WAYNE.
IT WAS FOR BATMAN!

IT WAS MEANT FOR YOU.
BUT IT CAUGHT ME INSTEAD.
I TOLD YOU. THAT'S HOW I THINK OF MYSELF.
I'M GOING TO TRACE THE SUBLIMINAL SIGNAL BACK TO ITS SOURCE, SO WE KNOW WHERE SPELLBINDER'S LAIR IS.
THEN I'LL INSTALL A FEW EXTRA SCREENS IN YOUR VISOR AND KEEP A SIGNAL BLOCK FED INTO YOUR EAR.
SOUNDS PAINFUL.
JUST WANT TO MAKE SURE WHEN YOU CONFRONT SPELLBINDER, HE CAN'T USE VIDEO OR AUDIO TO SEND A SUBLIMINAL MESSAGE.
HE'LL TRY, BUT HE WON'T BE ABLE TO INFLUENCE YOU...
AND WON'T HE BE SURPRISED.


EXCELLENT. THE NEW SUBLIMINAL VID MENU IS WORKING WELL.
SOON NEITHER OF YOU WILL HAVE ANY WAY TO TELL THE REAL WORLD FROM THE WORLD I WANT YOU TO EXPERIENCE.
THEN YOU CAN HELP ME RID MY WORLD OF THAT MENACE. BATMAN.
I AM HERE.
THE IMPERATIVE I PROGRAMMED INTO YOU HAS WORKED MORE QUICKLY THAN EXPECTED.
I WONDER EXACTLY WHAT IT IS YOU THINK YOU'RE SEEING. A DEAR LOVED ONE, IN DANGER? A WORLD LEADER THREATENING EARTH?
I SEE A PETTY CRIMINAL WHO THINKS NOTHING OF CONTROLLING THE MINDS OF INNOCENT MEN AND WOMEN IF IT SUITS HIS PURPOSES.
URK!
I DON'T UNDERSTAND. HOW DID YOU ESCAPE MY SUBLIMINAL MESSAGE?
IT WAS ON 24 HOURS. EVERY BROADCAST, CABLE, NET, AND SATELLITE TV CHANNEL!
HOW COULD YOU HAVE MISSED IT?
TV? IT'S JUST A VAST WASTELAND OF MIND-NUMBING DRIVEL. NEVER WATCH IT.

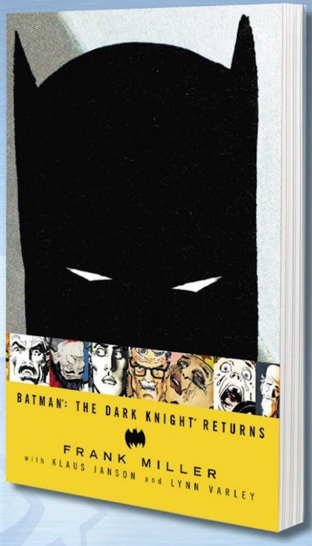

STOP HIM. HE'S ATTACKING THE PRESIDENT.
MY MOM WON'T LET ME.
KILL HIM, HE'S TRYING TO KIDNAP THAT CHILD.
MY SERVANTS, BATMAN. UNLIKE YOU, THEY HAVE FINISHED MY LITTLE BRAIN-TRAINING EXERCISE VIDEO.
THEY DON'T SEE YOU AND ME. THEY SEE WHATEVER IT TAKES TO GET THEM TO DO WHAT I WANT THEM TO DO.
UNGH!
AND A NICE SIDE EFFECT. THE TREATMENT STIMULATES THE ENDOCRINAL AND HORMONAL SYSTEMS. INCREASING NATURAL STRENGTH BY...
OOF!
CALL THE SECRET SERVICE.
LET HER GO.
WELL, I HAVEN'T EVEN MEASURED IT YET. WHA--?
CALL OUT THE NATIONAL GUARD. WHERE...?
HOW...?
SAY GOOD NIGHT, GRACIE.
POKSSHH!
AHHHHH!
UNGHnnn!


NO. YOU WON'T RUIN IT AGAIN.
LOOK NEXT TO YOU. THE MAN YOU SEE--
HE IS YOUR MOST TRUSTED--
HE IS THE MOST LOVED--
NO. PLEASE. WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO TO ME?
HOW ABOUT A TASTE OF YOUR OWN MEDICINE?
MY VOICE. HEAR MY VOICE.
HE IS YOUR MOST TRUSTED--
HE IS THE MOST LOVED--
DO I KNOW YOU? YES. YOU'RE HIM. THE MOST TRUSTED. THE MOST LOVED...
WHAT'S GOING ON THERE, TERRY? DID YOU GET HIM?
NOT ONLY DID I GET HIM, I THINK I MADE A FRIEND FOR LIFE...
TURNING SPELLBINDER TO YOUR SIDE WAS EASY COMPARED TO WHAT'S COMING NEXT.
WHAT ARE YOU...? OH. I ALMOST FORGOT. WHAT ARE WE GONNA DO?
JUST LEAVE EVERYTHING TO ME.


I HADN'T REALIZED THAT MY MEDICINE WAS SO FAR PAST THE EXPIRATION DATE. IF TERRY HADN'T BEEN THINKING SO QUICKLY... WELL, HE SAVED MY LIFE.
THAT DOESN'T MAKE UP FOR HIS RECENT ATTITUDE. OR HIS DISOBEDIENCE.
I AGREE COMPLETELY. BUT I'VE THOUGHT OF A COMPROMISE SO HE CAN STILL WORK FOR ME WHILE HE'S GROUNDED.
YES?
OF COURSE HE'LL HAVE TO TAKE CARE OF HIS CHORES HERE FIRST.
AND IN EXCHANGE WE'LL JUST EXTEND THE TIME THAT HE'S GROUNDED TO SAY, THREE WEEKS INSTEAD OF TWO.
WHAT?
MAKE IT FOUR AND WE'VE GOT A DEAL.
FOUR, IT IS. RIGHT, TERRY?
AND REMEMBER. EVEN WHEN HE'S AT YOUR HOUSE, I DON'T WANT HIM WATCHING ANY TV.
OH, I THINK WE CAN ALL AGREE TO THAT ONE. "IT'S JUST A VAST WASTELAND OF MIND-NUMBING DRIVEL."
OR SO I'VE "HEARD."
END

FROM THE WRITER OF
300 & SIN CITY

FRANK MILLER

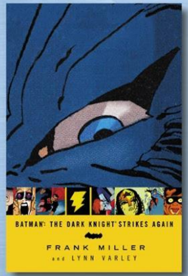


Frank Miller's classic graphic novel features a Gotham City that has sunk into decadence and lawlessness ten years after an aging Batman retired. The Dark Knight returns in a blaze of glory when his city needs him most to end the threat of a brutal new generation of criminals while encountering the Joker, Two-Face and the Man of Steel for the final time.

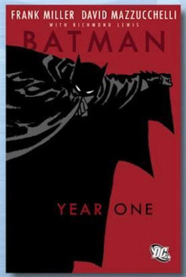
"Groundbreaking."
– USA TODAY

"It's film noir in cartoon panels."
–VANITY FAIR

BATMAN:
THE DARK KNIGHT
STRIKES AGAIN

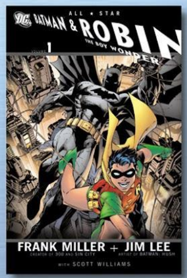


BATMAN: YEAR ONE



with
DAVID MAZZUCCHELLI

ALL STAR BATMAN & ROBIN,
THE BOY WONDER VOL. 1



with
JIM LEE

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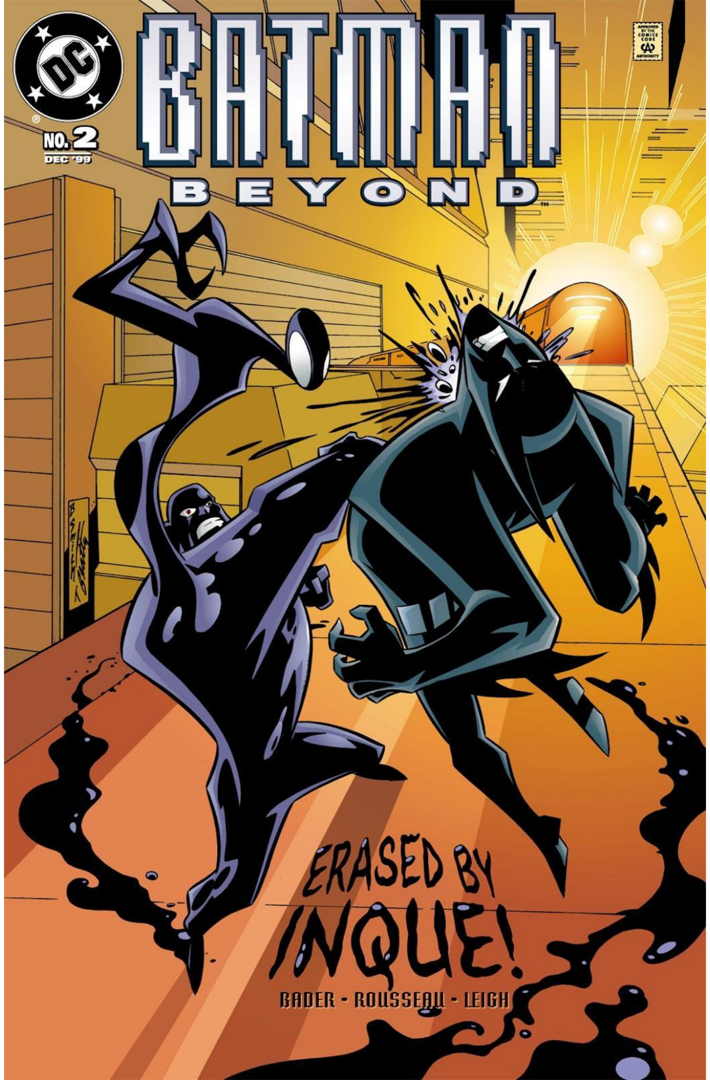
DC
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ERASED BY
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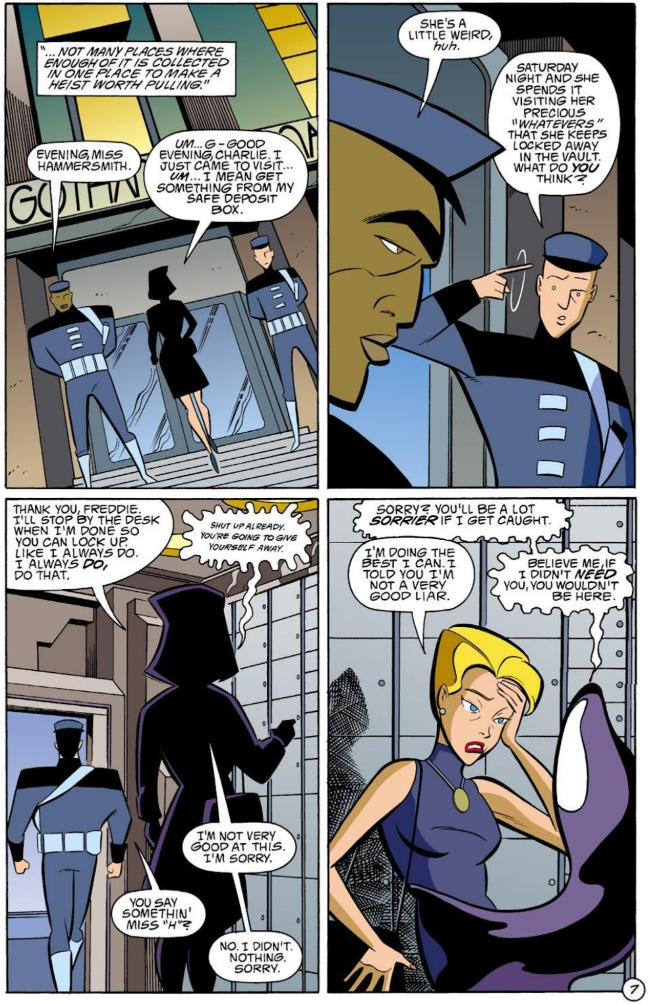
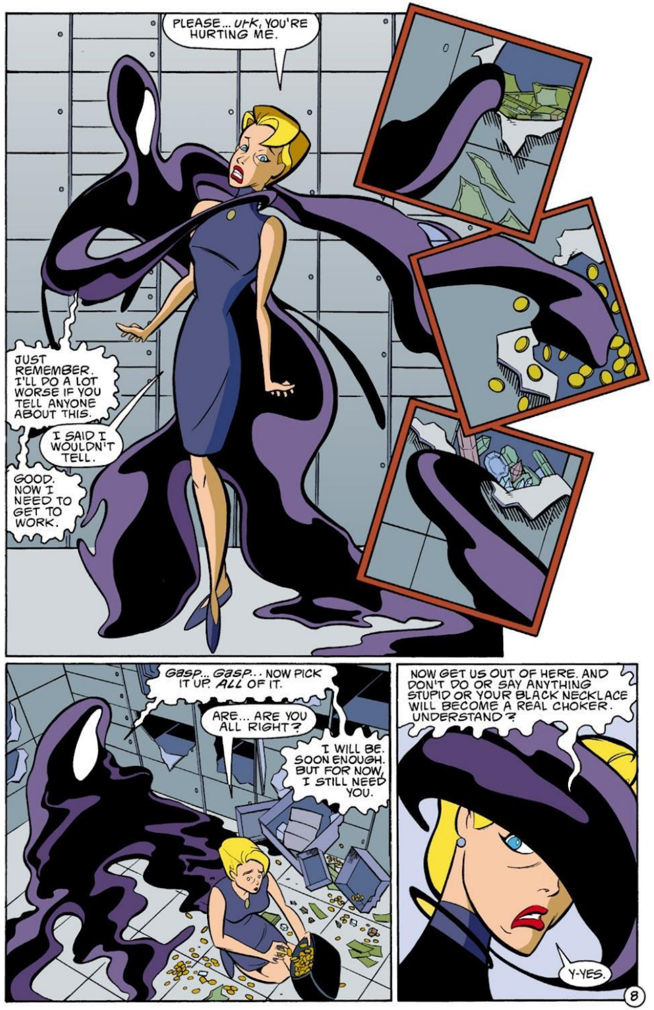
UHRNNNNN!
TERRY! TERRY, WAKE UP. YOU'RE FALLING!
HUH?
CRRRASSHH!
UNGH!
KKKSSHH!
GOTHAM UNIVERSITY CLUB ROOFTOP POOL • MEMBERS ONLY•
SPLASH!!
STILL WITH US?
YEAH. THE WATER SOFTENED THE FALL. I'VE GOT THE CASE---
HEY? HOW THE HECK DID HE GET THERE SO FAST?
I THINK YOU MEAN SHE.
ANOTHER ONE? ARE THEY EVERY-WHERE?
OHhhnn!
WHAT THE HECK--?
5

Uhnnn!
GOTTA GET THIS GUY TO A HOSPITAL. SORRY, BRUCE. THEY GOT AWAY WITH THE STUFF.
IT'S ALL RIGHT. I'M BETTING...
...WE'LL SEE THEM AGAIN. THIS ISN'T THEIR FIRST HIT IN GOTHAM. THERE HAVE BEEN OTHER THEFTS BY INDIVIDUALS MATCHING THE DESCRIPTION OF THE BLACK ARMORED GANG.
THAT SUIT WAS REALLY HIGH-END. THEY'VE GOT TO HAVE SOME SERIOUS FINANCING.
THEY COULD BE ANOTHER ARM OF KOBRA, ALTHOUGH THE MERCHANDISE THEY'VE BEEN STEALING SEEMS LIKE SMALL CHANGE FOR THAT GROUP.
WHAT KIND OF "MERCHANDISE?"
HARD CURRENCY ITEMS THAT CAN BE USED LIKE CASH, ONLY MORE NEGOTIABLE AND LESS TRACEABLE.
DIAMONDS, RARE COINS, COLLECTIBLES.
SOUNDS LIKE THE PERFECT FORM OF PAYMENT FOR ILLEGAL TRANSACTIONS.
IT IS. BUT IT'S ALSO HARD TO FIND. MOST OF IT IS IN THE HANDS OF PRIVATE COLLECTORS. SPREAD AROUND,...
6

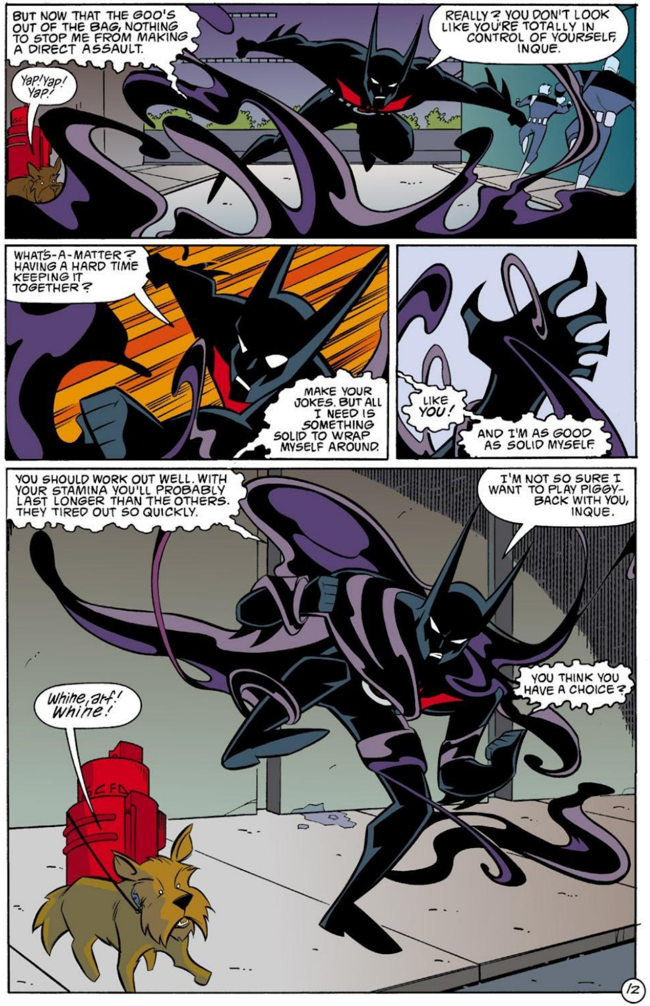

"...NOT MANY PLACES WHERE ENOUGH OF IT IS COLLECTED IN ONE PLACE TO MAKE A HEIST WORTH PULLING."
EVENING, MISS HAMMERSMITH.
UM... G-GOOD EVENING, CHARLIE. I JUST CAME TO VISIT... UM... I MEAN GET SOMETHING FROM MY SAFE DEPOSIT BOX.
SHE'S A LITTLE WEIRD, huh.
SATURDAY NIGHT AND SHE SPENDS IT VISITING HER PRECIOUS "WHATEVERS" THAT SHE KEEPS LOCKED AWAY IN THE VAULT. WHAT DO YOU THINK?
THANK YOU, FREDDIE. I'LL STOP BY THE DESK WHEN I'M DONE SO YOU CAN LOCK UP. LIKE I ALWAYS DO. I ALWAYS DO, DO THAT.
SHUT UP ALREADY. YOU'RE GOING TO GIVE YOURSELF AWAY.
I'M NOT VERY GOOD AT THIS. I'M SORRY.
YOU SAY SOMETHIN' MISS "H"?
NO. I DIDN'T. NOTHING. SORRY.
SORRY? YOU'LL BE A LOT SORRIER IF I GET CAUGHT.
I'M DOING THE BEST I CAN. I TOLD YOU I'M NOT A VERY GOOD LIAR.
BELIEVE ME, IF I DIDN'T NEED YOU, YOU WOULDN'T BE HERE.

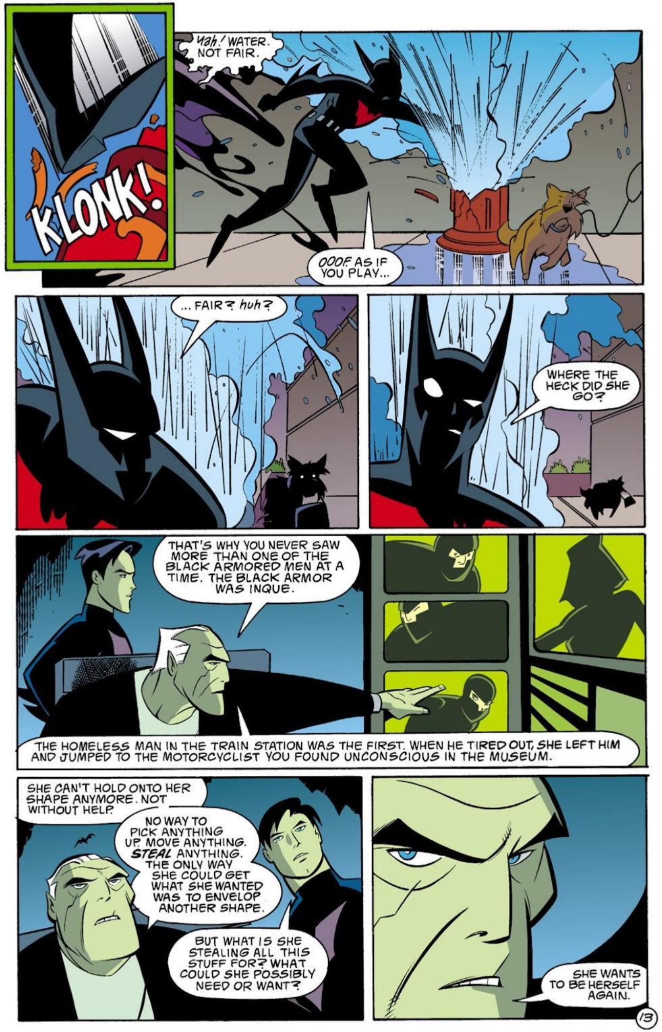

PLEASE... URK, YOU'RE HURTING ME.
JUST REMEMBER. I'LL DO A LOT WORSE IF YOU TELL ANYONE ABOUT THIS.
I SAID I WOULDN'T TELL.
GOOD. NOW I NEED TO GET TO WORK.
Gasp... Gasp... NOW PICK IT UP. ALL OF IT.
ARE... ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
I WILL BE. SOON ENOUGH. BUT FOR NOW, I STILL NEED YOU.
NOW GET US OUT OF HERE. AND DON'T DO OR SAY ANYTHING STUPID OR YOUR BLACK NECKLACE WILL BECOME A REAL CHOKER. UNDERSTAND?
Y-YES.

HAVE A NICE NIGHT, MISS HAMMERSMITH.
YES. THANK YOU.
WAIT. STOP HER! STOP HER!
WHAT'D SHE DO?
SHE RANSACKED THE SAFE-DEPOSIT BOXES.
PLEASE. DON'T HURT ME. YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND.
Oh WE UNDERSTAND.
Oh NO YOU DON'T.
OOF!
Oh DEAR. I'M SO SORRY.
UNGH!
I DON'T WANT TO HAVE TO HURT YOU, MISS H.
FUNNY. I DON'T MIND HURTING YOU.
UNGH!

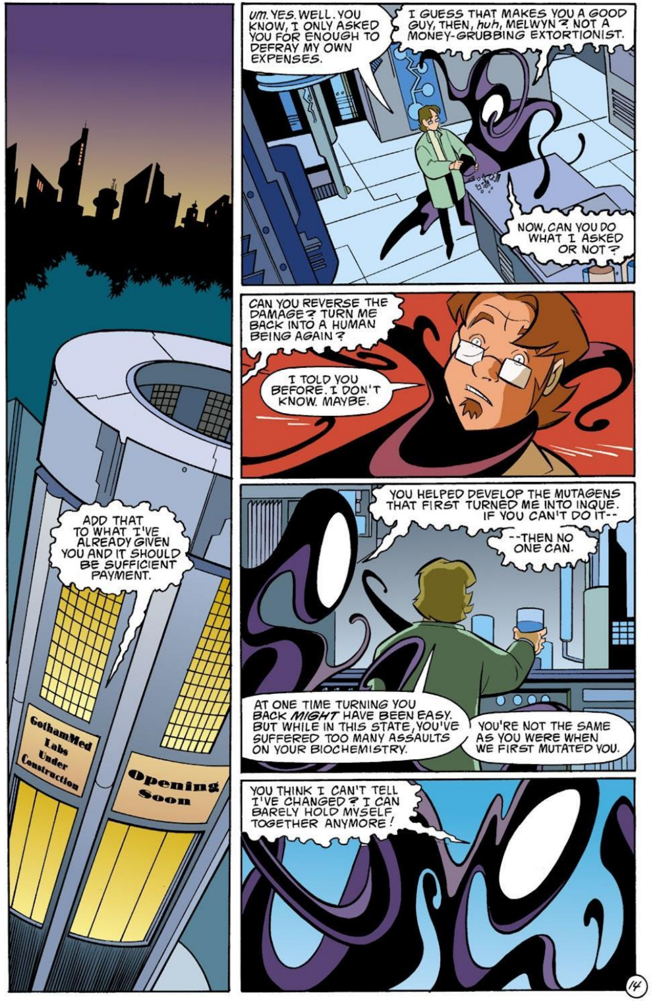
NO! DON'T HURT HIM!
LADY, WHO ARE YOU TALKING TO?
SHE'S BATTY, JUST SHOOT HER!!
WAIT! NO! DON'T SHOOT. DON'T SHOOT!
DON'T BE SUCH A GIRLIE-GIRL, SMITHY.
WHAT THE HECK? WHO SAID THAT?
GO AHEAD, BOYS, SHOOT!
OHNNN.
NO! GET OFF ME! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
BORROWING YOUR FORM FOR A WHILE. HOPE YOU DON'T MIND.

Mmmflphmmfppph!
FREDDIE! FREDDIE, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
HE'S DOING EXACTLY WHAT I MAKE HIM DO.
MAYBE YOU'D LIKE TO SEE WHAT IT FEELS LIKE?
AHHHHH!!
OOF!
UNGH!
UNFF!
YOU AGAIN?!
INQUE! I THOUGHT YOU WERE DEAD.
BECAUSE I WANTED YOU TO THINK THAT.
YOU MEN, GET AWAY FROM HERE. QUICKLY!
Yap! Yap! Yap!


BUT NOW THAT THE GOO'S OUT OF THE BAG, NOTHING TO STOP ME FROM MAKING A DIRECT ASSAULT.
Yap! Yap! Yap!
REALLY? YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE YOU'RE TOTALLY IN CONTROL OF YOURSELF, INQUE.
WHAT'S-A-MATTER? HAVING A HARD TIME KEEPING IT TOGETHER?
MAKE YOUR JOKES. BUT ALL I NEED IS SOMETHING SOLID TO WRAP MYSELF AROUND.
LIKE YOU!
AND I'M AS GOOD AS SOLID MYSELF.
YOU SHOULD WORK OUT WELL. WITH YOUR STAMINA YOU'LL PROBABLY LAST LONGER THAN THE OTHERS. THEY TIRED OUT SO QUICKLY.
I'M NOT SO SURE I WANT TO PLAY PIGGY-BACK WITH YOU, INQUE.
YOU THINK YOU HAVE A CHOICE?
Whine, arf! Whine!

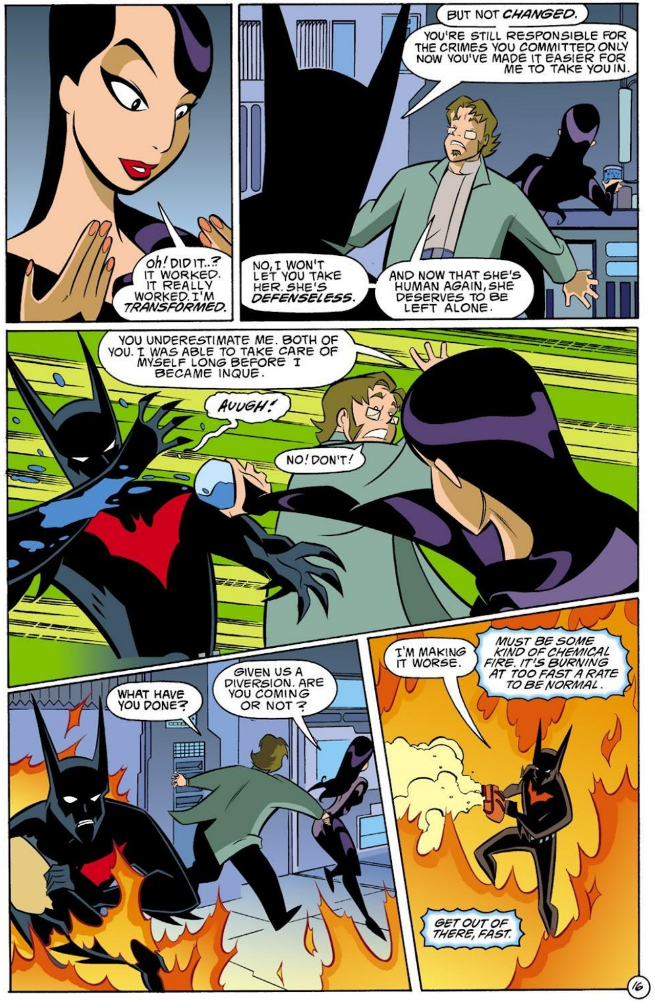


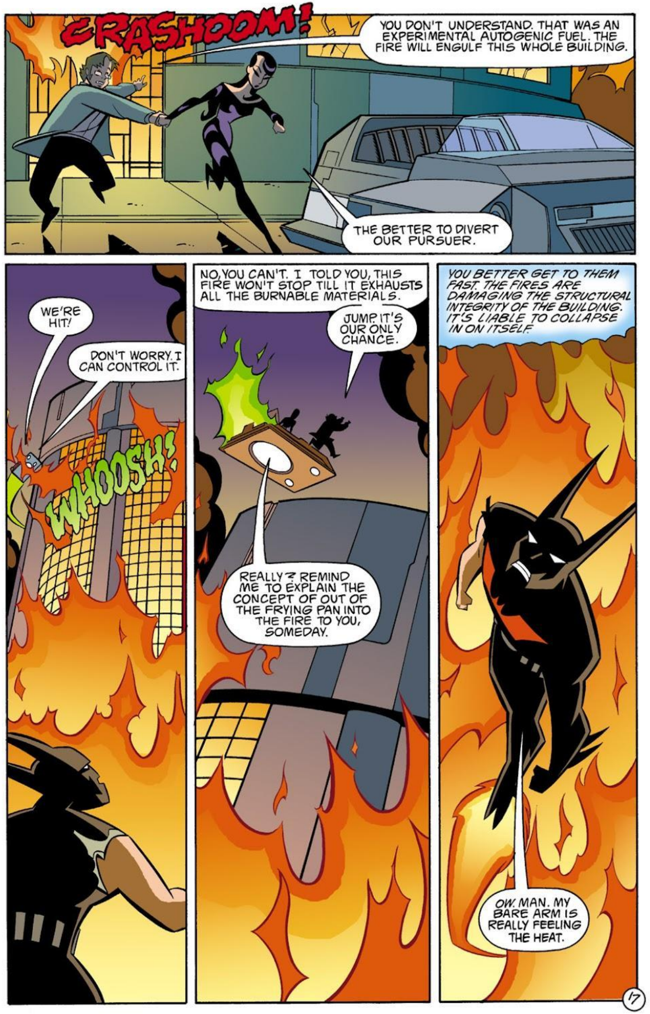
KLONK!
Yah! WATER. NOT FAIR.
OOOF. AS IF YOU PLAY...
... FAIR? huh?
WHERE THE HECK DID SHE GO?
THAT'S WHY YOU NEVER SAW MORE THAN ONE OF THE BLACK ARMORED MEN AT A TIME. THE BLACK ARMOR WAS INQUE.
THE HOMELESS MAN IN THE TRAIN STATION WAS THE FIRST. WHEN HE TIRED OUT, SHE LEFT HIM AND JUMPED TO THE MOTORCYCLIST YOU FOUND UNCONSCIOUS IN THE MUSEUM.
SHE CAN'T HOLD ONTO HER SHAPE ANYMORE. NOT WITHOUT HELP.
NO WAY TO PICK ANYTHING UP. MOVE ANYTHING. STEAL ANYTHING. THE ONLY WAY SHE COULD GET WHAT SHE WANTED WAS TO ENVELOP ANOTHER SHAPE.
BUT WHAT IS SHE STEALING ALL THIS STUFF FOR? WHAT COULD SHE POSSIBLY NEED OR WANT?
SHE WANTS TO BE HERSELF AGAIN.
13



ADD THAT TO WHAT I'VE ALREADY GIVEN YOU AND IT SHOULD BE SUFFICIENT PAYMENT.
GothamMed Labs Under Construction
Opening Soon
UM. YES. WELL. YOU KNOW, I ONLY ASKED YOU FOR ENOUGH TO DEFRAY MY OWN EXPENSES.
I GUESS THAT MAKES YOU A GOOD GUY, THEN, huh, MELWYN? NOT A MONEY-GRUBBING EXTORTIONIST.
NOW, CAN YOU DO WHAT I ASKED OR NOT?
CAN YOU REVERSE THE DAMAGE? TURN ME BACK INTO A HUMAN BEING AGAIN?
I TOLD YOU BEFORE. I DON'T KNOW. MAYBE.
YOU HELPED DEVELOP THE MUTAGENS THAT FIRST TURNED ME INTO INQUE. IF YOU CAN'T DO IT--
--THEN NO ONE CAN.
AT ONE TIME TURNING YOU BACK MIGHT HAVE BEEN EASY. BUT WHILE IN THIS STATE, YOU'VE SUFFERED TOO MANY ASSAULTS ON YOUR BIOCHEMISTRY.
YOU'RE NOT THE SAME AS YOU WERE WHEN WE FIRST MUTATED YOU.
YOU THINK I CAN'T TELL I'VE CHANGED? I CAN BARELY HOLD MYSELF TOGETHER ANYMORE!
14

THE CHANGES TO YOUR DNA MAKE ANY MUTAGENIC MANIPULATION DANGEROUS. UNPREDICTABLE.
IT MIGHT NOT WORK. OR YOU MIGHT END UP WITH ZERO COHESION. YOU'D FALL APART.
OR WORSE, TOO MUCH COHESION. YOU'D TURN SOLID.
IT MIGHT MAKE YOU TOTALLY AND COMPLETELY HUMAN AGAIN.
THAT'S WHAT I WANT.
NO. YOU DON'T. BELIEVE ME. ONCE YOU'VE BEEN SPECIAL, LIKE YOU ARE, LIVING LIKE AN ORDINARY HUMAN AGAIN WILL BE UNBEARABLE. THAT MIGHT BE THE WORST OF ALL.
BUT IT'S MY CHOICE TO MAKE. NOW GIVE IT TO ME.
ALL RIGHT. BUT REMEMBER WHAT I SAID.
AUGH!
RRRGGGHHH!
MFFFP!!


OH! DID IT..? IT WORKED. IT REALLY WORKED. I'M TRANSFORMED.
BUT NOT CHANGED.
YOU'RE STILL RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CRIMES YOU COMMITTED. ONLY NOW YOU'VE MADE IT EASIER FOR ME TO TAKE YOU IN.
NO, I WON'T LET YOU TAKE HER. SHE'S DEFENSELESS.
AND NOW THAT SHE'S HUMAN AGAIN, SHE DESERVES TO BE LEFT ALONE.
YOU UNDERESTIMATE ME. BOTH OF YOU. I WAS ABLE TO TAKE CARE OF MYSELF LONG BEFORE I BECAME INQUE.
AUUGH!
NO! DON'T!
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?
GIVEN US A DIVERSION. ARE YOU COMING OR NOT?
I'M MAKING IT WORSE.
MUST BE SOME KIND OF CHEMICAL FIRE. IT'S BURNING AT TOO FAST A RATE TO BE NORMAL.
GET OUT OF THERE, FAST.



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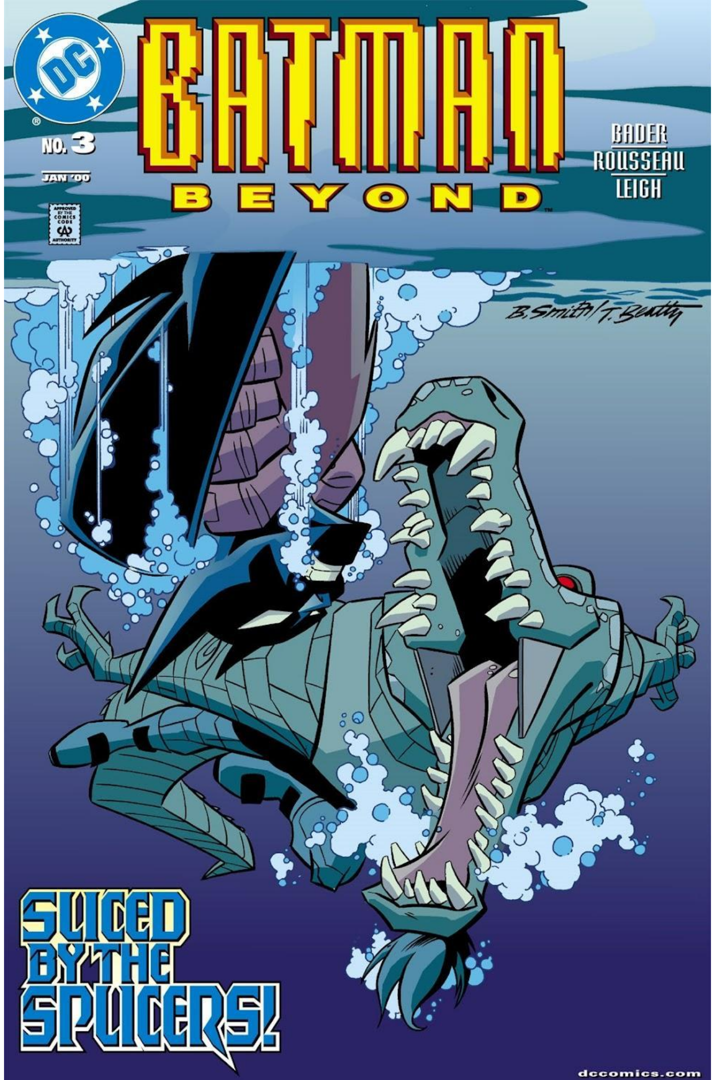
INQUE. YOU'RE HUMAN NOW. THE FALL WILL KILL YOU. LET ME HELP.
I'D RATHER DIE.
NO!
FWOOM!
INQUE!
NO! INQUE!
19

COME ON. DIG. DIG!
IT'S TOO LATE. IF SHE SURVIVED THE FIRE, THERE'S NO WAY SHE SURVIVED THE FALL.
AND EVEN IF SHE DID, SHE'S BURIED UNDER THE WHOLE BUILDING. IT'LL TAKE HOVERDOZERS AND ANTIGRAV-CRANES DAYS TO REACH HER.
uhnnnnnn!
20

"I WARNED HER. I TOLD HER SHE COULDN'T GO BACK.
"SHE'D FORGOTTEN WHAT IT MEANT TO BE MERELY HUMAN."
uhnnn.
OKAY. ASSESS THE SITUATION.
BROKEN RIBS. BROKEN LEGS.
HEAD GASH. MAYBE CONCUSSION.
DRIP
I'D FORGOTTEN ABOUT PAIN. HUMAN PAIN.
I MUST BE FADING, THOUGH. THE PAIN IS DIMINISHING...
FUNNY. I'M DYING BUT I FEEL... GOOD... BETTER THAN I HAVE IN A LONG WHILE...
DRIP
DRIP
DRIP
DRIP
BLOOD LOSS DELUSIONS, I'M SURE. UNLESS...
WELL, WELL, WELL.
LOOKS LIKE MELWYN WAS RIGHT.
21

"I COULDN'T SAVE HER, BRUCE."
SHE DIDN'T WANT TO BE SAVED.
NOT BY YOU.
I KNOW THAT.
"BUT IT DOESN'T HELP."
TAXI CALL
GOOD.
huh?
THE DAY THAT SOMEONE'S DEATH DOESN'T BOTHER YOU IS THE DAY THAT I START TO WORRY.
"BESIDES, I NEVER COUNT SOMEONE AS OUT UNTIL THEY FIND THE BODY. AND EVEN THEN..."
"WE ONLY GET ONE LIFE, BRUCE."
I KNEW A WOMAN ONCE WHO HAD NINE OF THEM.
THE END


DC
BATMAN BEYOND
NO. 3
JAN '00
BADER
ROUSSEAU
LEIGH
SLICED BY THE SPLICERS!
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CONVERSION BY WILDSTORM

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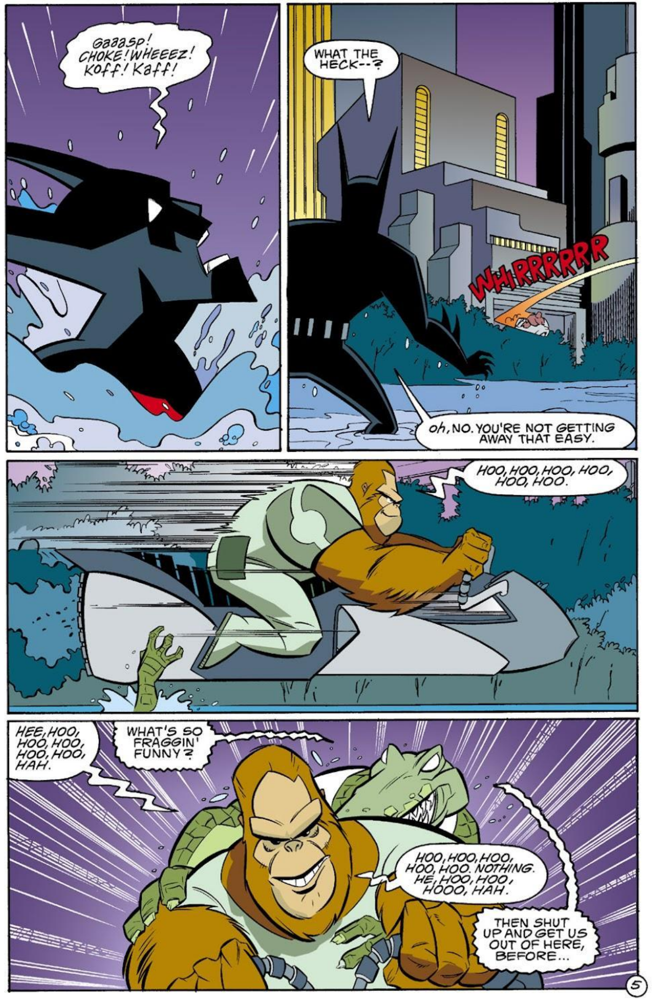
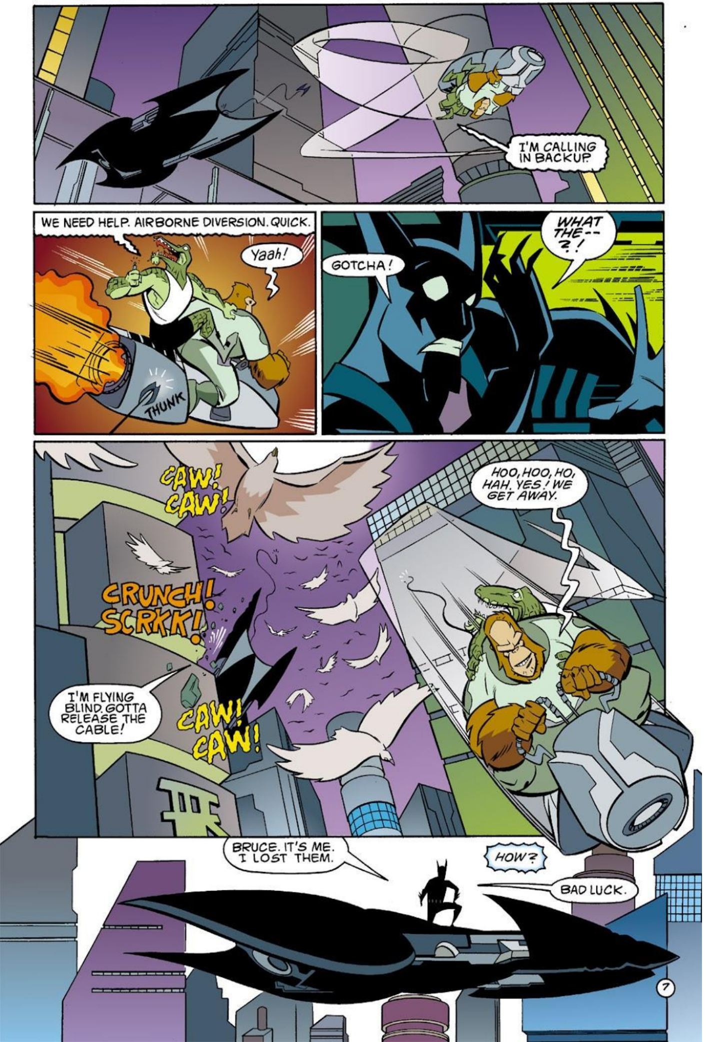
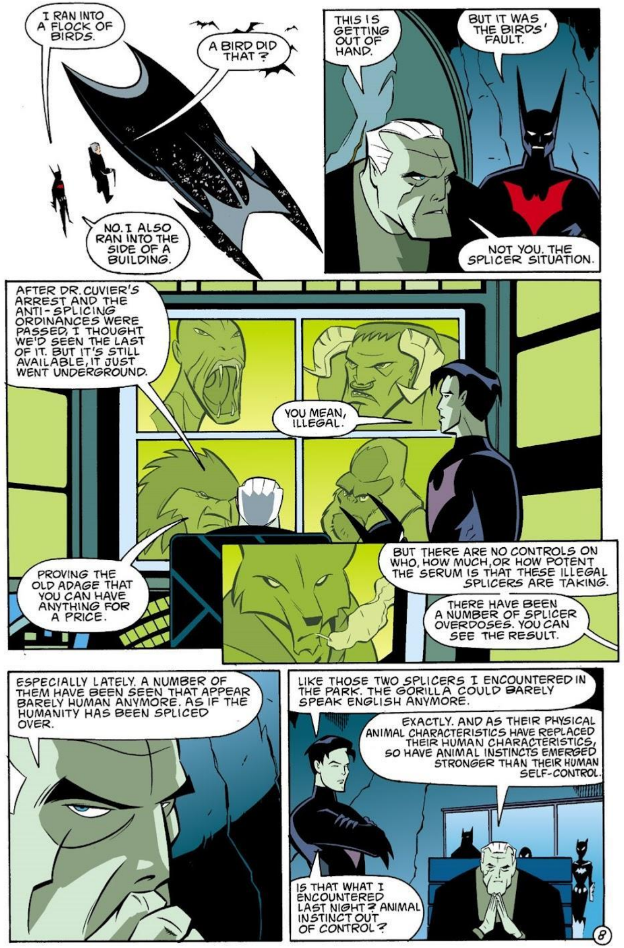

Gaaasp! CHOKE! WHEEEZ! Koff! Kaff!
WHAT THE HECK--?
WHIRRRRRR
oh, NO. YOU'RE NOT GETTING AWAY THAT EASY.
HOO, HOO, HOO, HOO, HOO, HOO.
HEE, HOO, HOO, HOO, HOO, HOO, HAH.
WHAT'S SO FRAGGIN' FUNNY?
HOO, HOO, HOO, HOO, HOO. NOTHING. HE, HOO, HOO, HOOO, HAH.
THEN SHUT UP AND GET US OUT OF HERE, BEFORE...

--YAAAHHH!
HOO, HOO, HOO, HOO. YOU NO WORRY. DA BAT NO GONNA CATCH ME. NO CATCH ME. HOO, HOO.
JUST KEEP YOUR PAWS ON THE WHEEL AND YOUR EYES ON THE ROAD. I'LL MAKE SURE WE'VE LOST--
ahhhh!
HOO, HOO, HOO, HAH, HAH, HAH!!
THE BAT!!
I GET US AWAY. HE NO CATCH US. HOO, HOO, HOO, HOO. HE NO CATCH.
WHAT, ARE YOU CRAZY?
MAYBE. HEE, HEE, HOO, HOO, HOO. MAYBE.





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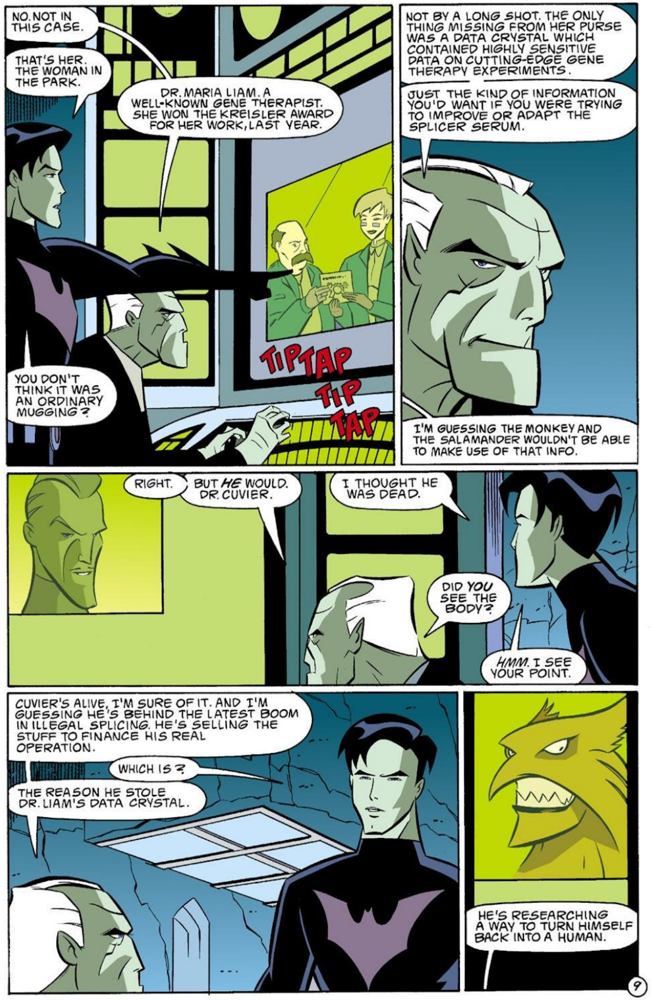
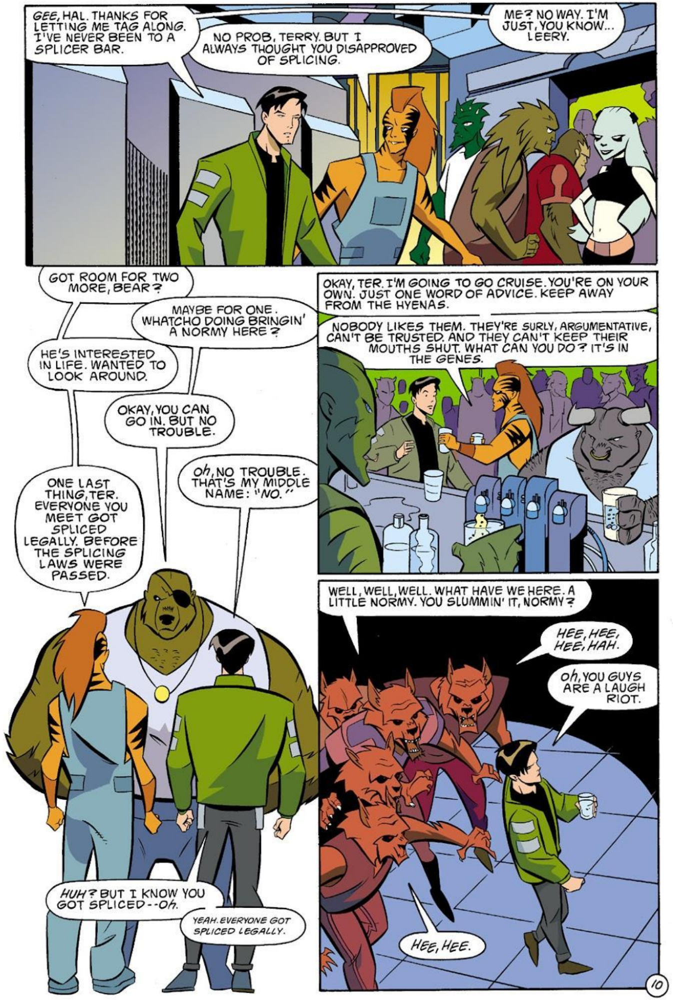
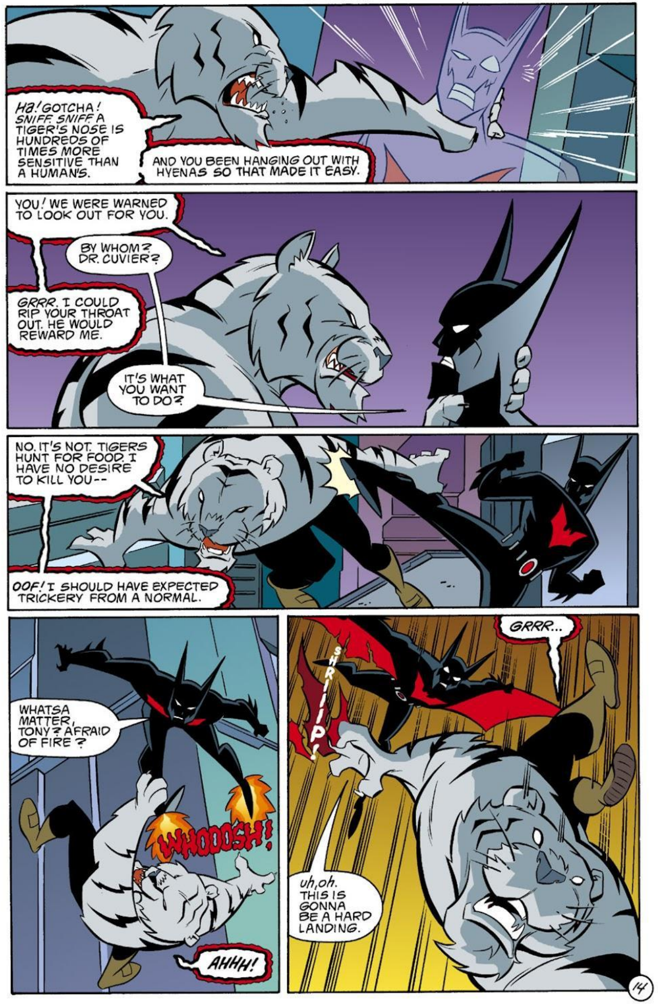

NO. NOT IN THIS CASE.
THAT'S HER. THE WOMAN IN THE PARK.
DR. MARIA LIAM. A WELL-KNOWN GENE THERAPIST. SHE WON THE KREISLER AWARD FOR HER WORK, LAST YEAR.
YOU DON'T THINK IT WAS AN ORDINARY MUGGING?
TIP TAP TIP TAP
NOT BY A LONG SHOT. THE ONLY THING MISSING FROM HER PURSE WAS A DATA CRYSTAL WHICH CONTAINED HIGHLY SENSITIVE DATA ON CUTTING-EDGE GENE THERAPY EXPERIMENTS.
JUST THE KIND OF INFORMATION YOU'D WANT IF YOU WERE TRYING TO IMPROVE OR ADAPT THE SPLICER SERUM.
I'M GUESSING THE MONKEY AND THE SALAMANDER WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO MAKE USE OF THAT INFO.
RIGHT.
BUT *HE* WOULD. DR. CUVIER.
I THOUGHT HE WAS DEAD.
DID *YOU* SEE THE BODY?
HMM. I SEE YOUR POINT.
CUVIER'S ALIVE, I'M SURE OF IT. AND I'M GUESSING HE'S BEHIND THE LATEST BOOM IN ILLEGAL SPLICING. HE'S SELLING THE STUFF TO FINANCE HIS REAL OPERATION.
WHICH IS?
THE REASON HE STOLE DR. LIAM'S DATA CRYSTAL.
HE'S RESEARCHING A WAY TO TURN HIMSELF BACK INTO A HUMAN.
9


GEE, HAL. THANKS FOR LETTING ME TAG ALONG. I'VE NEVER BEEN TO A SPLICER BAR.
NO PROB, TERRY. BUT I ALWAYS THOUGHT YOU DISAPPROVED OF SPLICING.
ME? NO WAY. I'M JUST, YOU KNOW... LEERY.
GOT ROOM FOR TWO MORE, BEAR?
MAYBE FOR ONE. WHATCHO DOING BRINGIN' A NORMY HERE?
HE'S INTERESTED IN LIFE. WANTED TO LOOK AROUND.
OKAY, YOU CAN GO IN. BUT NO TROUBLE.
Oh, NO TROUBLE. THAT'S MY MIDDLE NAME: "*NO.*"
ONE LAST THING, TER. EVERYONE YOU MEET GOT SPLICED LEGALLY. BEFORE THE SPLICING LAWS WERE PASSED.
HUH? BUT I KNOW YOU GOT SPLICED--*Oh*.
YEAH. EVERYONE GOT SPLICED LEGALLY.
OKAY, TER. I'M GOING TO GO CRUISE. YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN. JUST ONE WORD OF ADVICE. KEEP AWAY FROM THE HYENAS.
NOBODY LIKES THEM. THEY'RE SURLY, ARGUMENTATIVE, CAN'T BE TRUSTED. AND THEY CAN'T KEEP THEIR MOUTHS SHUT. WHAT CAN YOU DO? IT'S IN THE GENES.
WELL, WELL, WELL. WHAT HAVE WE HERE. A LITTLE NORMY. YOU SLUMMIN' IT, NORMY?
HEE, HEE, HEE, HAH.
Oh, YOU GUYS ARE A LAUGH RIOT.
HEE, HEE.
10

YOU MAKIN' FUN? WE BITE YOUR HEAD OFF, YOU WON'T LAUGH SO MUCH THEN, NORMY.
BUT WE WILL.
HEE, HEE, HEE, HAH, HEE, HEE.
YEAH. WE WILL. WE WILL.
HEY, ALPHA-BOY. ANYBODY EVER HAVE THE GUTS TO TELL YOU YOU'RE BREATH SMELLS LIKE CARRION?
YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT, I GUESS.
NYUK, NYUK, NYUK, NYUK.
OOMPH!
ach! HURNH!
I CAN HANDLE BOTH OF YOU.
SMACK!
AWF! YIP!
OOF!
THUNK!
Gack, KOFF KOFF! I GIVE. I GIVE.
aw, GEE. AND IT WAS JUST STARTING TO GET FUN.
BLURK. Gahg. ME TOO. I GIVE TOO.
11

HEY, HEY, HEY! WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?
SNIFF SNIFF
WE'RE GETTING YOUR SCENT.
SNIFF
SNIFF
IT'S THE WAY WE SHOW RESPECT, MAN.
SNIFF
FIND ANOTHER WAY TO DO IT.
Sniff, ARP! WHIMPER.
OKAY, MAN. WE'LL BUY YOU A ROUND.
YOU GOT THE STUFF YOU WANNA BE A HYENA? WE GOT A CONNECTION'S GOT WHATEVER YOU NEED.
YEAH. HE'S GOT BIRD, LIZARD, CAT, DOG, WHATEVER. BUT WE THINK YOU'D MAKE A GREAT HYENA. BE OUR LEADER?
SOUNDS GREAT. CAN YOU INTRODUCE ME?
WE'RE NOT EVEN SUPPOSED TO TELL. IT'S A SECRET. BUT HE'S THE ONE.
HE GOT THE GOODS. HE GOT WHAT YOU WANT, MAN. IF YOU WANT SPLICE. STRONG STUFF, TOO.
EXIT
YOU TELL HIM WE SENT YOU.
NO, BETTER NOT. DON'T TELL HIM NOTHING ABOUT US. WE GET IN TROUBLE.
MAYBE HE'LL TALK TO YOU. MAYBE HE'LL KILL YOU. NO TELLING.
HEE, HEE, HEE. MAYBE HE'LL KILL HIM.
12

CRCK!
Grrrr.
JEEZ. HOW DID HE HEAR THAT? TIGER EARS, I GUESS.
STAY VERY STILL, TERRY. DON'T MOVE. DON'T BREATHE.
COME OUT, COME OUT WHEREVER YOU ARE.
13


Ha! GOTCHA! SNIFF. SNIFF. A TIGER'S NOSE IS HUNDREDS OF TIMES MORE SENSITIVE THAN A HUMAN'S.
AND YOU BEEN HANGING OUT WITH HYENAS SO THAT MADE IT EASY.
YOU! WE WERE WARNED TO LOOK OUT FOR YOU.
BY WHOM? DR. CUVIER?
GRRR. I COULD RIP YOUR THROAT OUT. HE WOULD REWARD ME.
IT'S WHAT YOU WANT TO DO?
NO. IT'S NOT. TIGERS HUNT FOR FOOD. I HAVE NO DESIRE TO KILL YOU--
OOF! I SHOULD HAVE EXPECTED TRICKERY FROM A NORMAL.
WHATSA MATTER, TONY? AFRAID OF FIRE?
WHOOOSH!
AHHH!
GRRR...
SHRIIIIP!
uh,oh. THIS IS GONNA BE A HARD LANDING.
14

OOF!
KNOCKED THE WIND RIGHT OUT OF ME.
NOW WHERE DID THAT SPLICER GET TO? HE HAD TO HAVE HIT HARDER THAN I DID WITH NO WINGS---
UNGH!
SURPRISED TO SEE ME, BATMAN?
CATS ALWAYS LAND ON THEIR FEET, REMEMBER? READY TO...
...POUNCE. HUH?

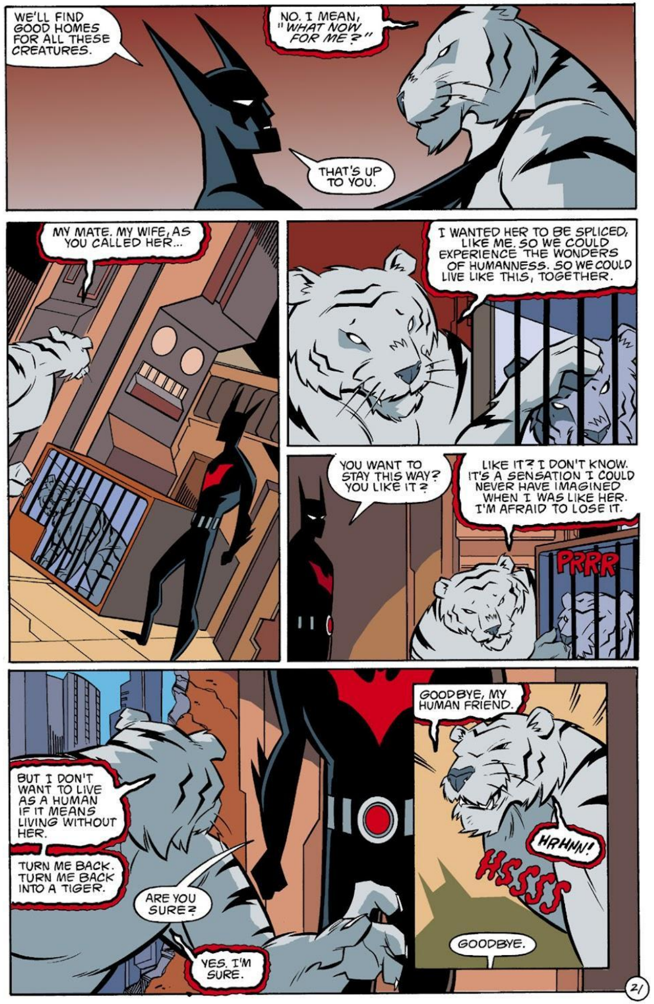
WHAT IS THAT? WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
IT'S AN ANTIDOTE. IT UNDOES THE SPLICING DR. CUVIER DID TO YOU.
NO! PLEASE! I DON'T WANT IT. DON'T TURN ME BACK, PLEASE DON'T TURN ME BACK!
IT'S THE ANIMAL DNA THAT'S CONFUSING YOU. MAKING YOU AGGRESSIVE.
I'M NOT AGGRESSIVE.
YOU TRIED TO KILL ME.
I HAD TO. HE SAID THAT...
WHO SAID? DR. CUVIER?
TELL ME, AND I WON'T USE IT. I PROMISE.
I'VE HEARD YOUR KIND PROMISE BEFORE.
MY KIND?
NEVER MIND. WHAT DO I HAVE TO LOSE?
YES. DR. CUVIER. HE MADE ME THIS WAY. HE PROMISED IF I OBEYED HIM, HE'D MAKE MY MATE LIKE ME. SO WE COULD BE TOGETHER.
BUT IF YOU LET ME GIVE YOU THE SPLICER SERUM ANTIDOTE, YOU'LL BE HUMAN AGAIN. THEN YOU CAN BE WITH YOUR WIFE.
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND.

WHERE CAN I FIND HIM?
THE ABANDONED PAPER MILLS. HE'S GOT A LAB SET UP THERE. BE CAREFUL. HE HAS MANY SERVANTS LIKE ME WHO ARE IN HIS DEBT.
THANK YOU.
NO. THANK *YOU.* THIS IS THE FIRST KINDNESS ANYONE HAS EVER SHOWN ME. I WILL NOT FORGET IT.
I CAN SEE LAB EQUIPMENT. NOT MUCH ELSE. I'M GOING DOWN TO TAKE A LOOK.
BE CAREFUL. YOU HAVE ENOUGH SERUM ANTIDOTE TO REVERSE A SMALL ARMY, BUT YOU HAVE TO GET CLOSE ENOUGH TO EACH OF THEM TO USE IT.
IT'S THE RIGHT PLACE. CAGES. ALL KINDS OF ANIMALS. I THINK I'M TOO LATE. THE PLACE IS DESERTED. NOT A SOUL IN SIGHT.
IT DEPENDS ON HOW YOU DEFINE A SOUL, BATMAN.
PERSONALLY I THINK ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI WAS ALL WRONG. ABOUT ANIMALS HAVING SOULS.
WHAT DO YOU THINK, BOYS?
THEY'RE NOT THE BEST CONVERSATIONALISTS, BUT THEY DO OBEY ORDERS QUITE WELL. *SIC 'IM!*

AHHH!
THEY'LL TEAR YOU APART IF I LET THEM. WHICH I SHALL.
I KNOW WHAT YOU'VE DONE TO THESE PEOPLE. OVERDOSING THEM WITH SPLICE, PUMPING UP THEIR ANIMAL AGGRESSION TO SUIT YOUR PURPOSES.
YELP!
I'M PUTTING AN END TO YOUR TORTURE, CUVIER.
HSSSSS
CAW. CAW. SCREEEE.
FREEING THESE PEOPLE.
HSSSS
GIVING THEM BACK THEIR LIVES. THEIR HUMANITY.
HSSS
CAREFUL, BATMAN. YOU'RE NOT AS CLEVER AS YOU THINK YOU ARE.
OH, MY GOD. YOU HAVEN'T BEEN SPLICING HUMANS WITH TOO MUCH *ANIMAL DNA*. YOU'VE BEEN SPLICING ANIMALS WITH *HUMAN DNA*.
WELCOME TO THE MONKEY HOUSE, *BATMAN!*

AND YOU'VE JUST MADE IT WORSE FOR YOURSELF. FIGHTING WOLVES AND BOARS IS HARDER THAN FIGHTING SPLICERS, NO?
OOOF.
EITHER WAY, ANIMALS OR SPLICERS, THE ODDS ARE AGAINST YOU.
THE ODDS JUST IMPROVED.
THANKS. BUT WHY?
SCREEE.
YOU SHOWED ME MY FIRST KINDNESS. I TOLD YOU I WOULDN'T FORGET THAT. NOW LET'S CAGE THIS MENAGERIE.
GIDDYAP, LITTLE DOGGIE. OR RAMMIE.
HSSS
NO, I WON'T LET THIS HAPPEN. ALL MY GOOD WORK.
I GOT HIM. YOU CAGE THE WOLF.
KACHUNK!
I'M ON IT.
WHAT WAS THAT-- *huh*?

I WON'T LET YOU HURT HIM.
YOU WILL DO WHAT I TELL YOU.
YOU DON'T OWN ME.
SHBOOM!
DON'T I? IF YOU DON'T DO WHAT I SAY, YOU WILL NEVER GET WHAT YOU WANT MOST.
I KNOW... *uhn!*
THEN DIE! DIE ALONG WITH THE OTHERS WHO HAVE CROSSED ME!
HEY, CUVIER!
KEEP YOUR HANDS OFF MY KITTY.
KRACK!
UNGH!
YOU SAVED MY LIFE. I... THANK YOU.
CUVIER?
GONE.
WHAT NOW?


WE'LL FIND GOOD HOMES FOR ALL THESE CREATURES.
NO. I MEAN, "WHAT NOW FOR ME?"
THAT'S UP TO YOU.
MY MATE. MY WIFE, AS YOU CALLED HER...
I WANTED HER TO BE SPLICED, LIKE ME. SO WE COULD EXPERIENCE THE WONDERS OF HUMANNESS. SO WE COULD LIVE LIKE THIS, TOGETHER.
YOU WANT TO STAY THIS WAY? YOU LIKE IT?
LIKE IT? I DON'T KNOW. IT'S A SENSATION I COULD NEVER HAVE IMAGINED WHEN I WAS LIKE HER. I'M AFRAID TO LOSE IT.
PRRR
BUT I DON'T WANT TO LIVE AS A HUMAN IF IT MEANS LIVING WITHOUT HER.
TURN ME BACK. TURN ME BACK INTO A TIGER.
ARE YOU SURE?
YES. I'M SURE.
GOODBYE, MY HUMAN FRIEND.
HRHNN!
HSSSS
GOODBYE.

DO YOU THINK HE REMEMBERS? BEING HUMAN, I MEAN.
DO YOU THINK HE MISSES IT?
LOOK AT HIM. HE'S HAPPY. WHAT CHANCE WOULD HE HAVE HAD IF HE AND HIS MATE HAD BOTH BEEN SPLICED?
HE'S BETTER OFF AS A TIGER, TERRY.
BECAUSE HE WAS BORN THAT WAY?
ROARR!
NO. BECAUSE BEING HUMAN IS THE HARDEST ROAD TO HAPPINESS.
END

DC
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THE ROYAL FLUSH GANG DEALS...
...TWO OF A KIND?
10
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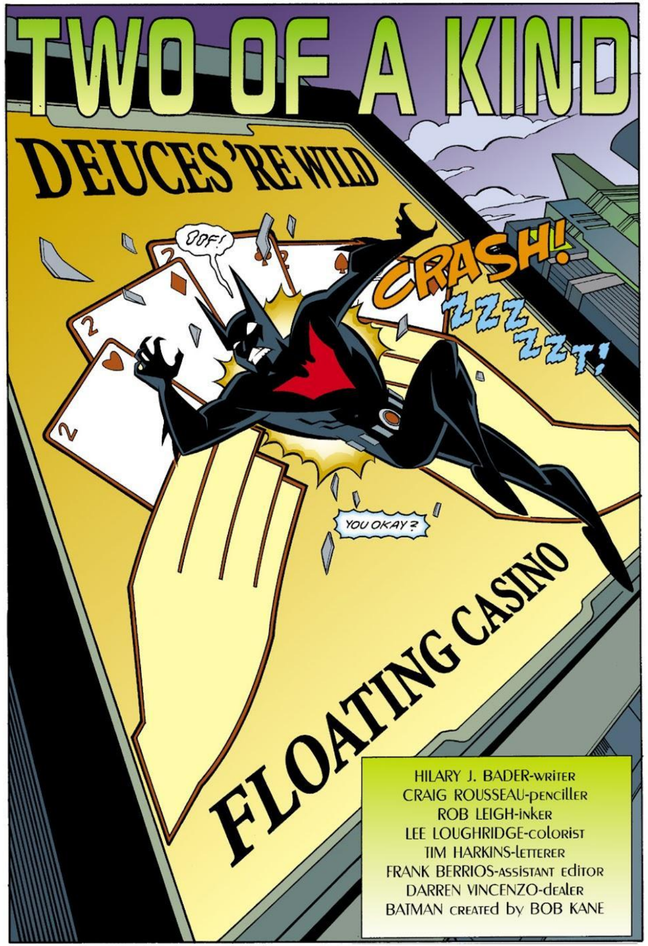
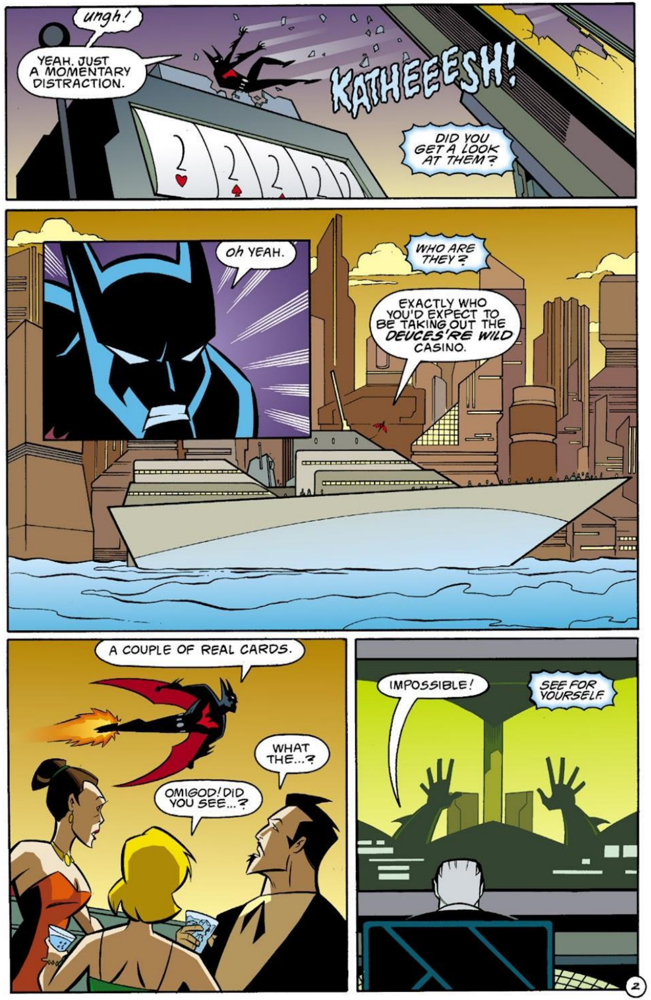
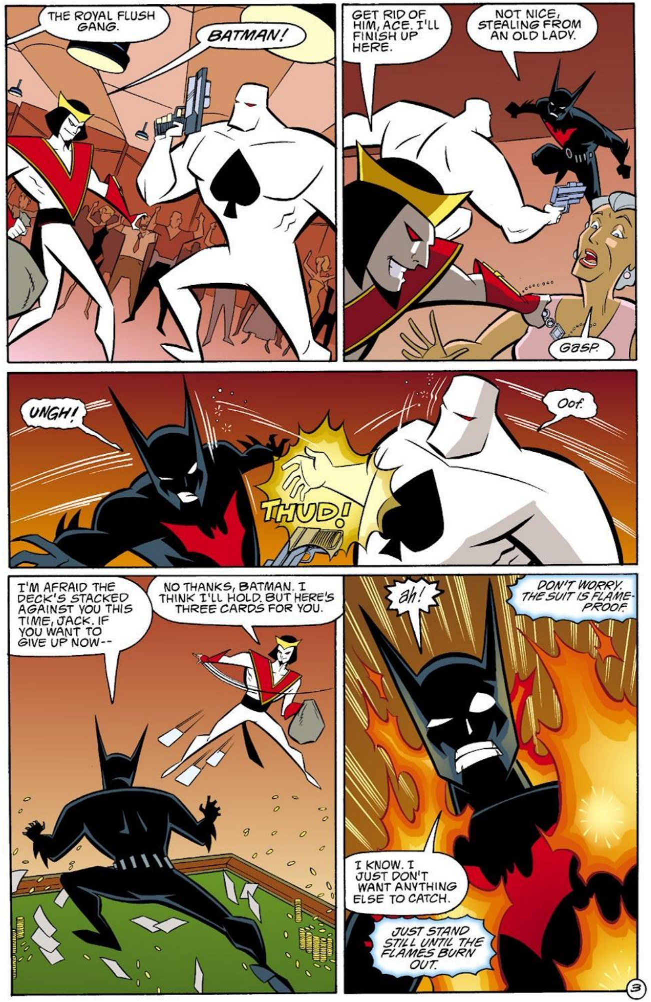
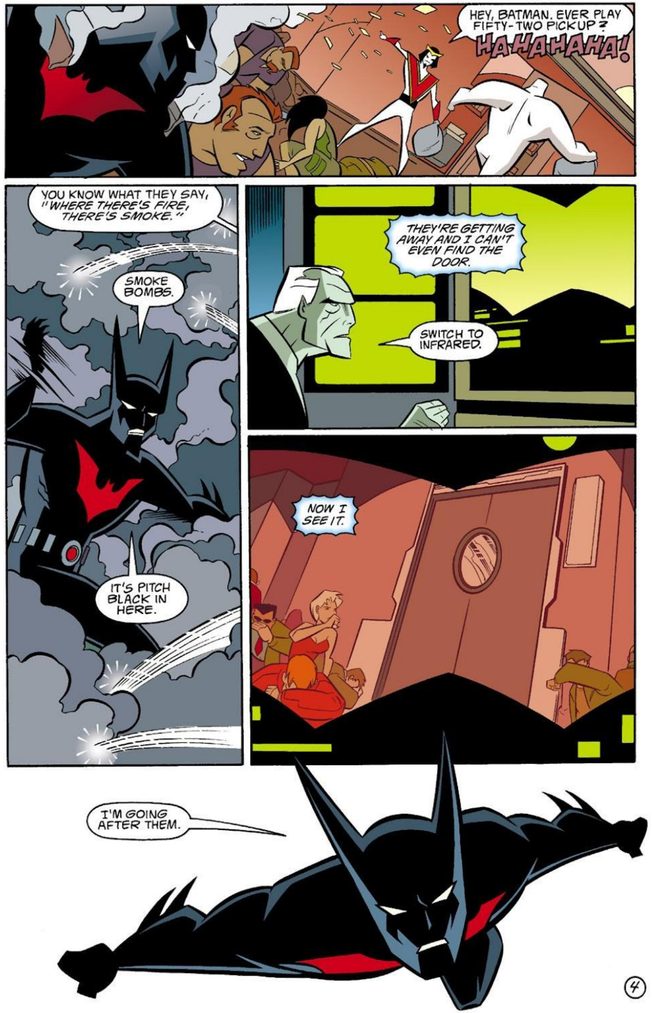

TWO OF A KIND
DEUCES'RE WILD
OOF!
CRASH!
ZZZZZZT!
YOU OKAY?
FLOATING CASINO
HILARY J. BADER-writer
CRAIG ROUSSEAU-penciller
ROB LEIGH-inker
LEE LOUGHRIDGE-colorist
TIM HARKINS-letterer
FRANK BERRIOS-assistant editor
DARREN VINCENZO-dealer
BATMAN created by BOB KANE


ungh!
YEAH, JUST A MOMENTARY DISTRACTION.
KATHEEESH!
DID YOU GET A LOOK AT THEM?
Oh YEAH.
WHO ARE THEY?
EXACTLY WHO YOU'D EXPECT TO BE TAKING OUT THE DEUCES'RE WILD CASINO.
A COUPLE OF REAL CARDS.
WHAT THE...?
OMIGOD! DID YOU SEE...?
IMPOSSIBLE!
SEE FOR YOURSELF.

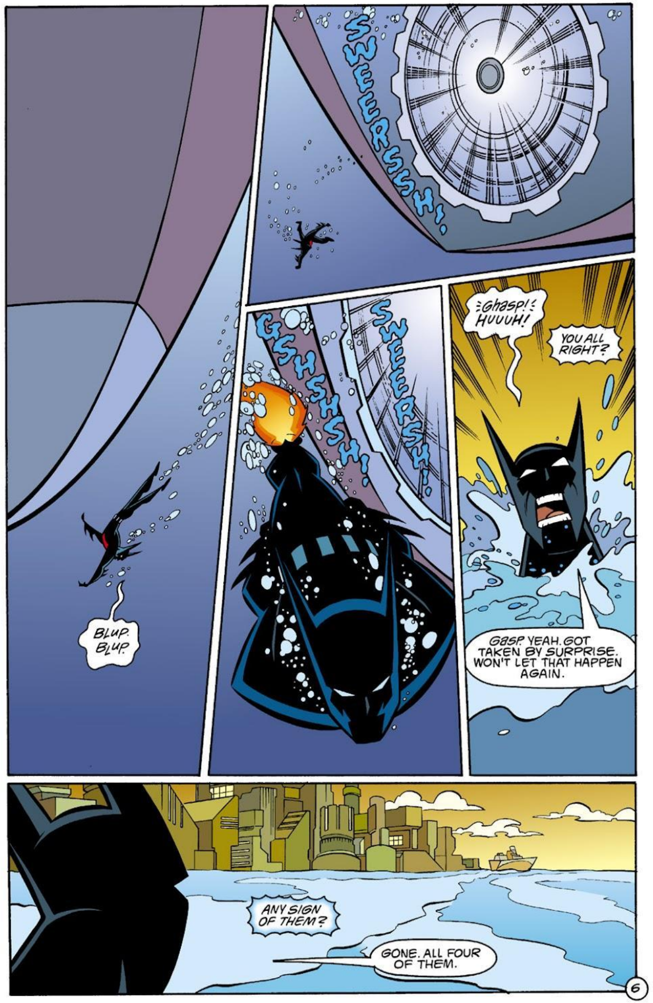


THE ROYAL FLUSH GANG.
BATMAN!
GET RID OF HIM, ACE. I'LL FINISH UP HERE.
NOT NICE, STEALING FROM AN OLD LADY.
GASP.
UNGH!
THUD!
Oof.
I'M AFRAID THE DECK'S STACKED AGAINST YOU THIS TIME, JACK. IF YOU WANT TO GIVE UP NOW--
NO THANKS, BATMAN. I THINK I'LL HOLD. BUT HERE'S THREE CARDS FOR YOU.
ah!
DON'T WORRY. THE SUIT IS FLAME-PROOF.
I KNOW. I JUST DON'T WANT ANYTHING ELSE TO CATCH.
JUST STAND STILL UNTIL THE FLAMES BURN OUT.
3

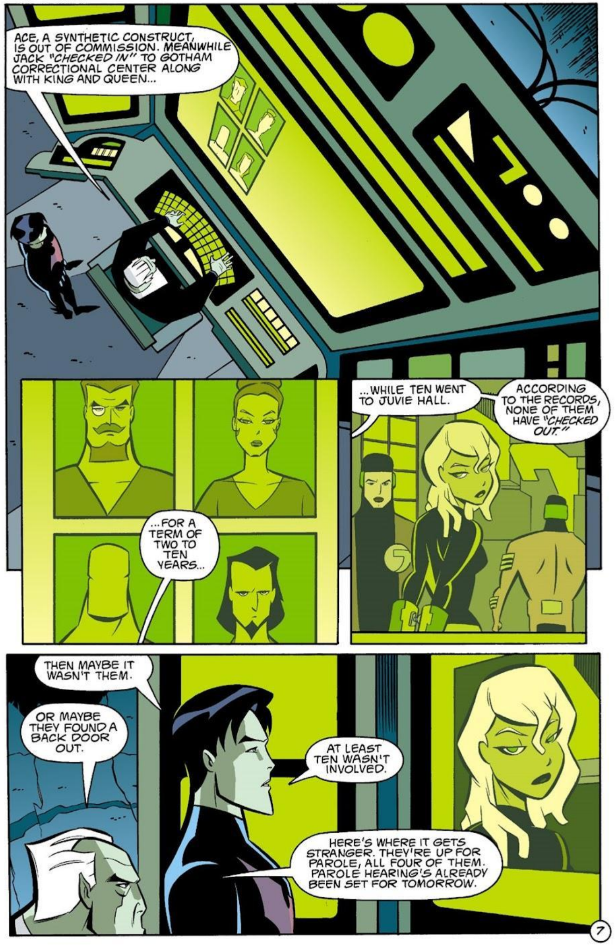


HEY, BATMAN. EVER PLAY FIFTY-TWO PICKUP?
HAHAHAHA!
YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY, "WHERE THERE'S FIRE, THERE'S SMOKE."
SMOKE BOMBS.
IT'S PITCH BLACK IN HERE.
THEY'RE GETTING AWAY AND I CAN'T EVEN FIND THE DOOR.
SWITCH TO INFRARED.
NOW I SEE IT.
I'M GOING AFTER THEM.
4

THEY'RE GONE.
THEY CAN'T BE. NOT THAT QUICKLY.
BETTER LOOK AROUND---
UNGH!
OUT OF HERE. NOW!
OOOF.
SPLASH!
DIVE, TERRY. DIVE!



SWEERSSH!
BLUP. BLUP.
GSHSHSH!
SWEERSH!
GHASP! HUUUH!
YOU ALL RIGHT?
GASP. YEAH. GOT TAKEN BY SURPRISE. WON'T LET THAT HAPPEN AGAIN.
ANY SIGN OF THEM?
GONE. ALL FOUR OF THEM.



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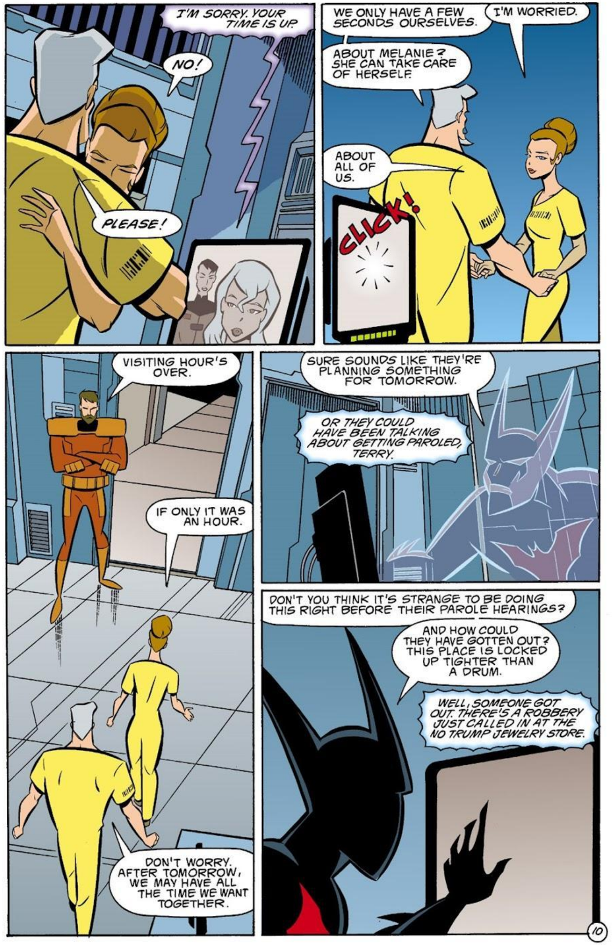

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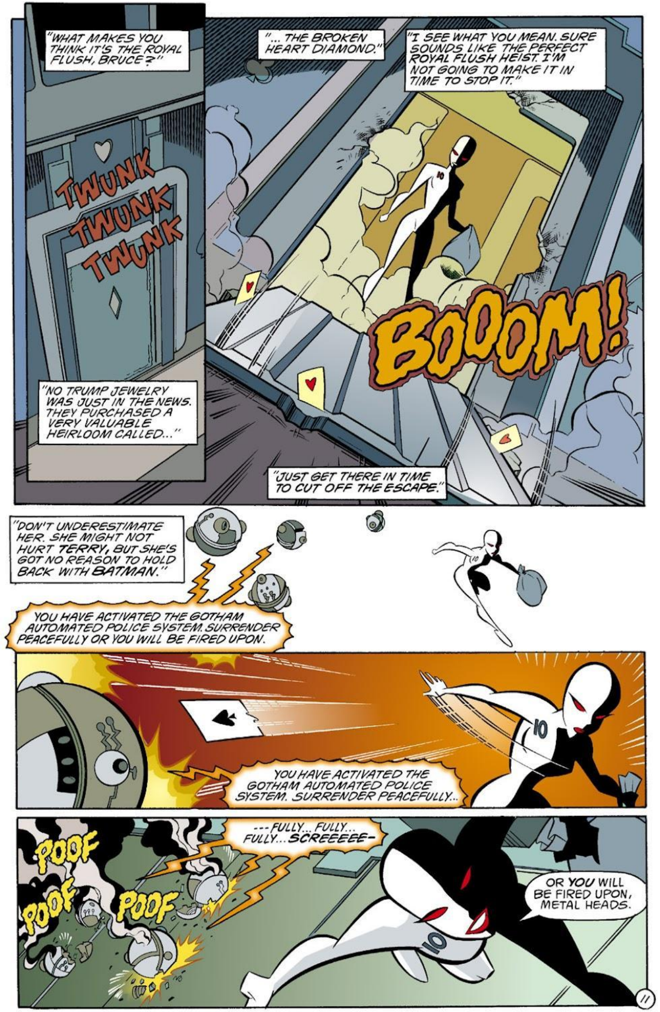

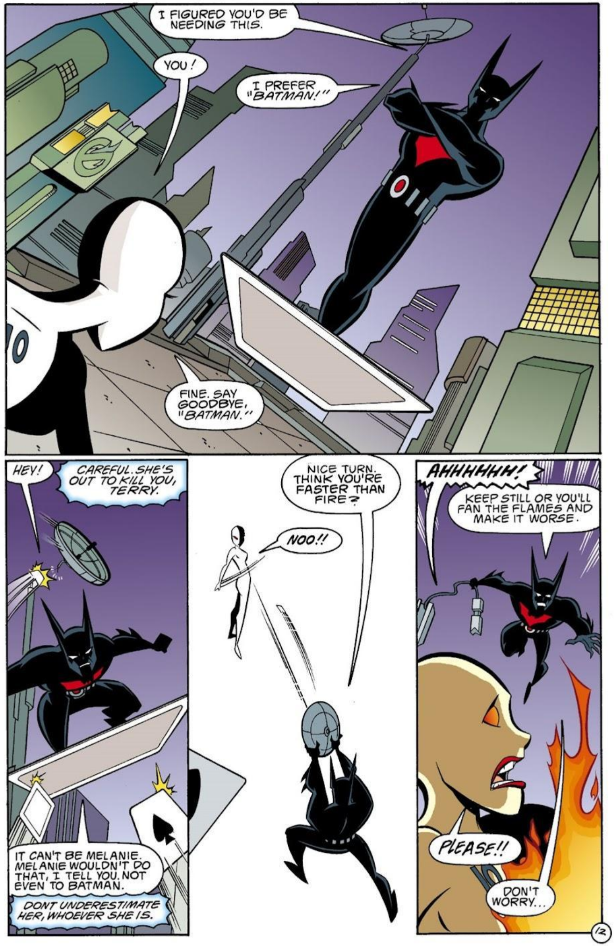

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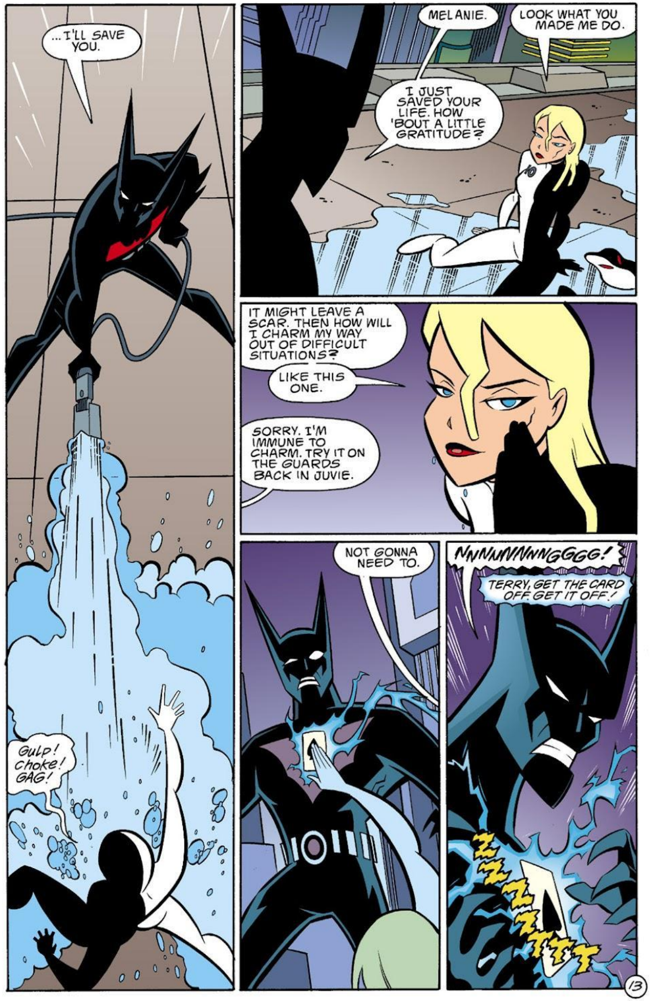
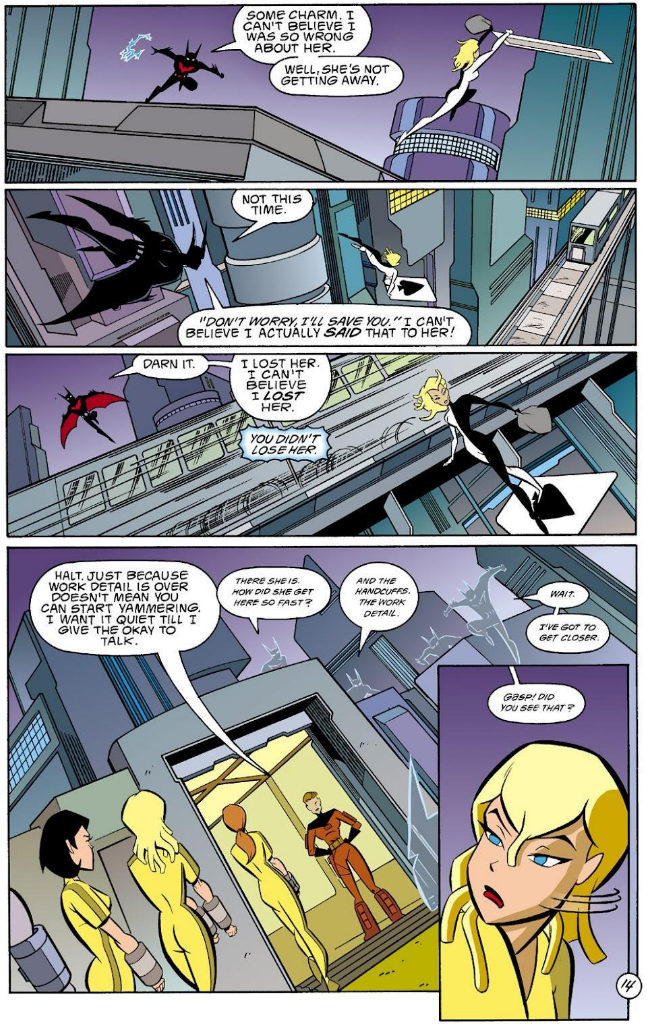
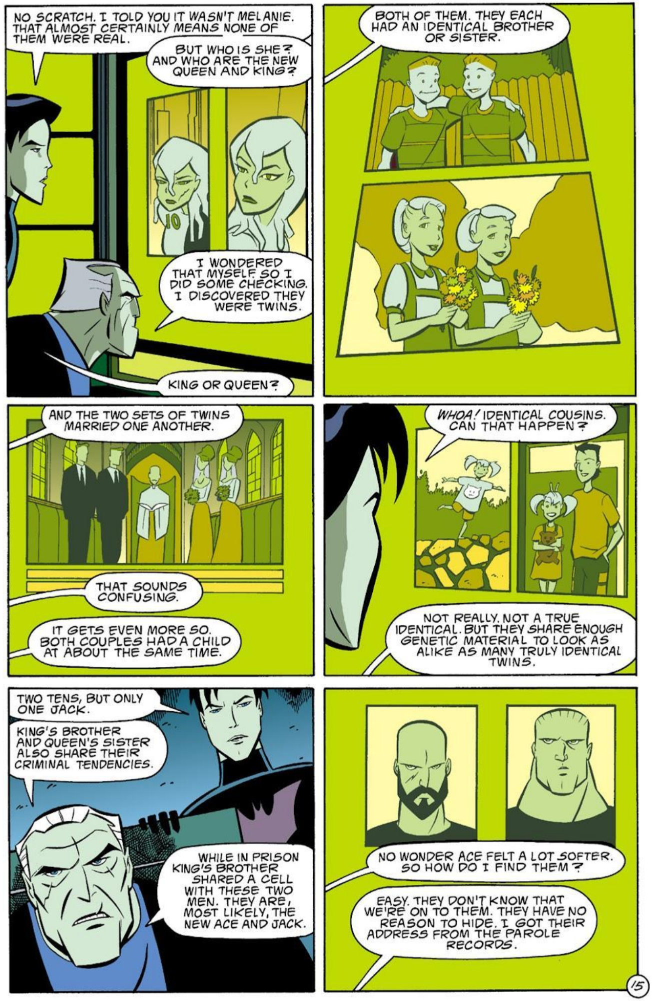
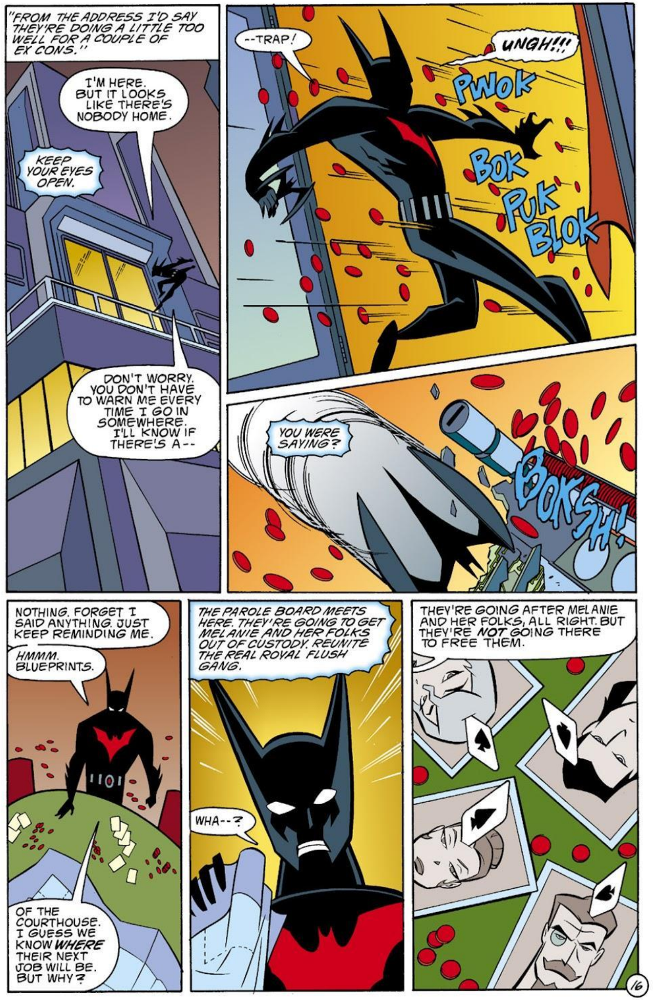

...I'LL SAVE YOU.
Gulp! choke! GAG!
MELANIE.
LOOK WHAT YOU MADE ME DO.
I JUST SAVED YOUR LIFE. HOW 'BOUT A LITTLE GRATITUDE?
IT MIGHT LEAVE A SCAR. THEN HOW WILL I CHARM MY WAY OUT OF DIFFICULT SITUATIONS?
LIKE THIS ONE.
SORRY. I'M IMMUNE TO CHARM. TRY IT ON THE GUARDS BACK IN JUVIE.
NOT GONNA NEED TO.
NNNNNNNNNGGGG!
TERRY, GET THE CARD OFF. GET IT OFF!
13

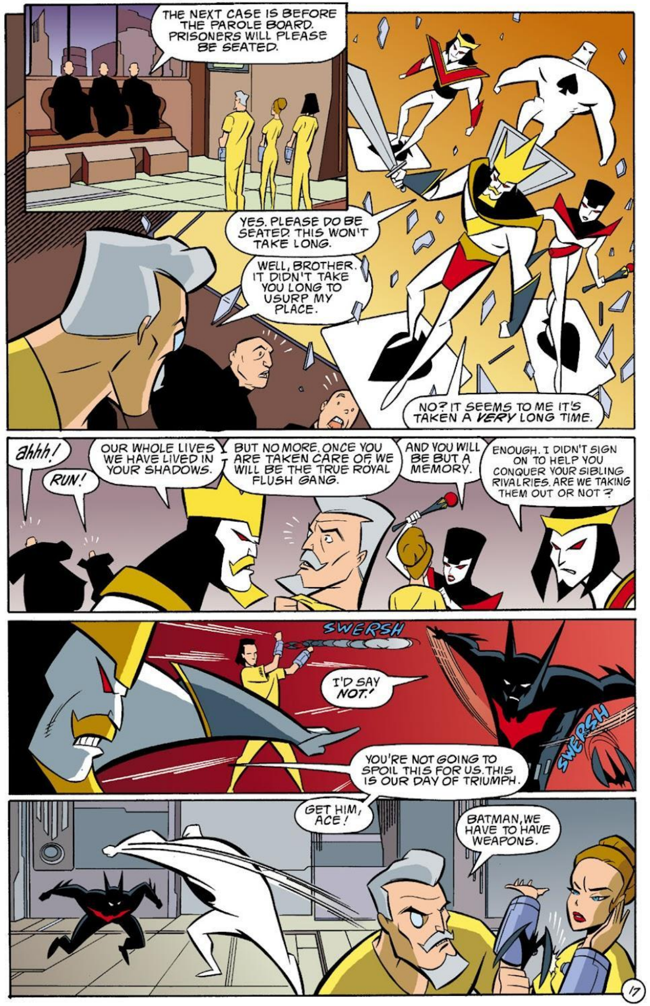

SOME CHARM. I CAN'T BELIEVE I WAS SO WRONG ABOUT HER.
WELL, SHE'S NOT GETTING AWAY.
NOT THIS TIME.
"DON'T WORRY, I'LL SAVE YOU." I CAN'T BELIEVE I ACTUALLY SAID THAT TO HER!
DARN IT.
I LOST HER. I CAN'T BELIEVE I LOST HER.
YOU DIDN'T LOSE HER.
HALT. JUST BECAUSE WORK DETAIL IS OVER DOESN'T MEAN YOU CAN START YAMMERING. I WANT IT QUIET TILL I GIVE THE OKAY TO TALK.
THERE SHE IS. HOW DID SHE GET HERE SO FAST?
AND THE HANDCUFFS. THE WORK DETAIL.
WAIT.
I'VE GOT TO GET CLOSER.
Gasp! DID YOU SEE THAT?
14

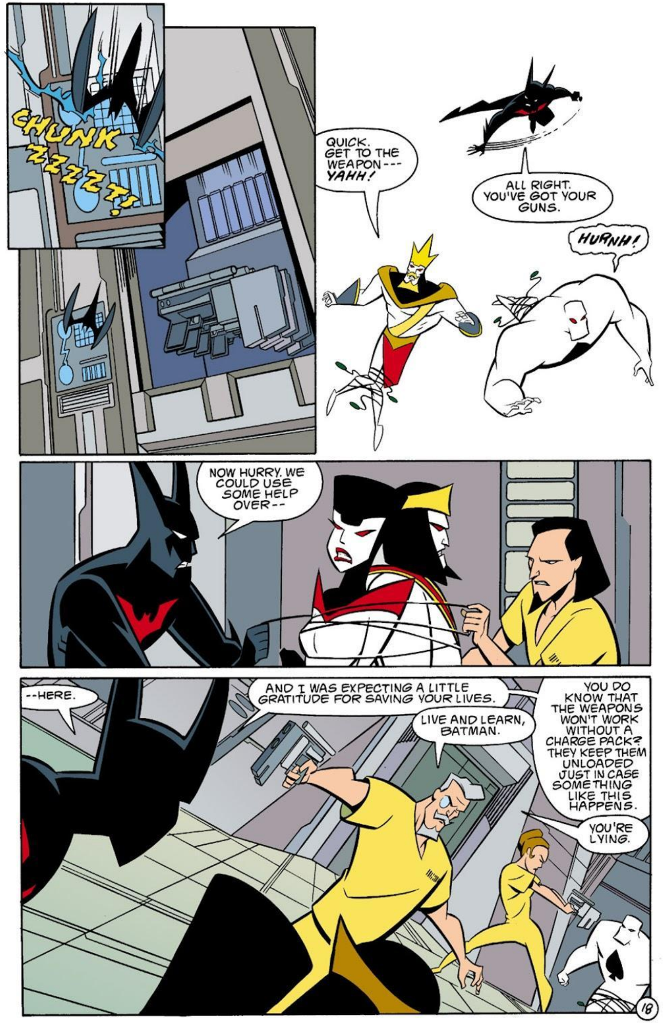


NO SCRATCH. I TOLD YOU IT WASN'T MELANIE. THAT ALMOST CERTAINLY MEANS NONE OF THEM WERE REAL.
BUT WHO IS SHE? AND WHO ARE THE NEW QUEEN AND KING?
I WONDERED THAT MYSELF SO I DID SOME CHECKING. I DISCOVERED THEY WERE TWINS.
KING OR QUEEN?
BOTH OF THEM. THEY EACH HAD AN IDENTICAL BROTHER OR SISTER.
AND THE TWO SETS OF TWINS MARRIED ONE ANOTHER.
THAT SOUNDS CONFUSING.
IT GETS EVEN MORE SO. BOTH COUPLES HAD A CHILD AT ABOUT THE SAME TIME.
WHOA! IDENTICAL COUSINS. CAN THAT HAPPEN?
NOT REALLY. NOT A TRUE IDENTICAL. BUT THEY SHARE ENOUGH GENETIC MATERIAL TO LOOK AS ALIKE AS MANY TRULY IDENTICAL TWINS.
TWO TENS, BUT ONLY ONE JACK.
KING'S BROTHER AND QUEEN'S SISTER ALSO SHARE THEIR CRIMINAL TENDENCIES.
WHILE IN PRISON KING'S BROTHER SHARED A CELL WITH THESE TWO MEN. THEY ARE, MOST LIKELY, THE NEW ACE AND JACK.
NO WONDER ACE FELT A LOT SOFTER. SO HOW DO I FIND THEM?
EASY. THEY DON'T KNOW THAT WE'RE ON TO THEM. THEY HAVE NO REASON TO HIDE. I GOT THEIR ADDRESS FROM THE PAROLE RECORDS.
15

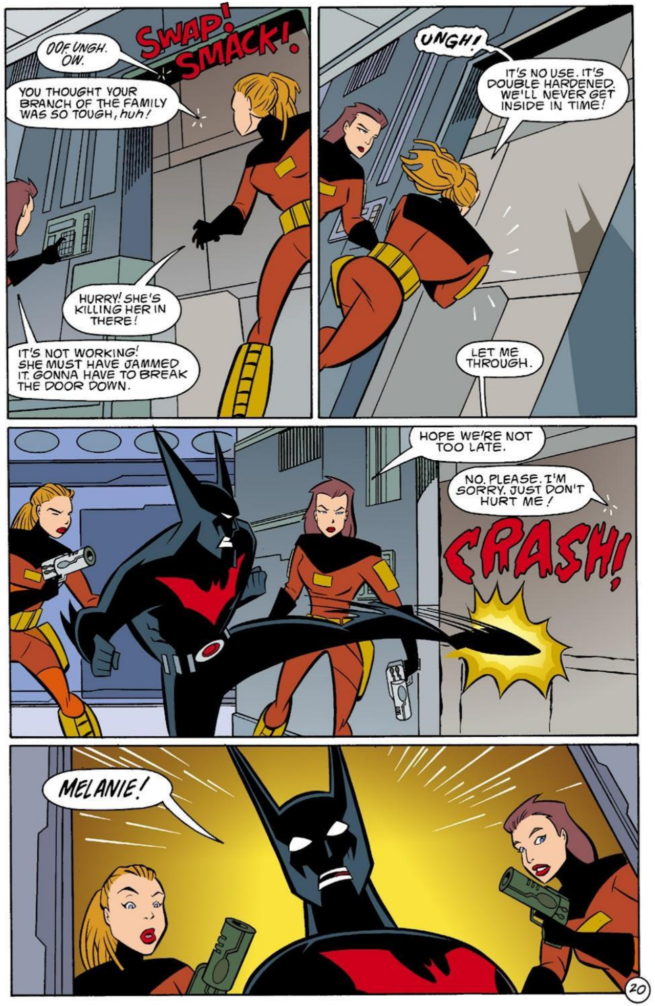


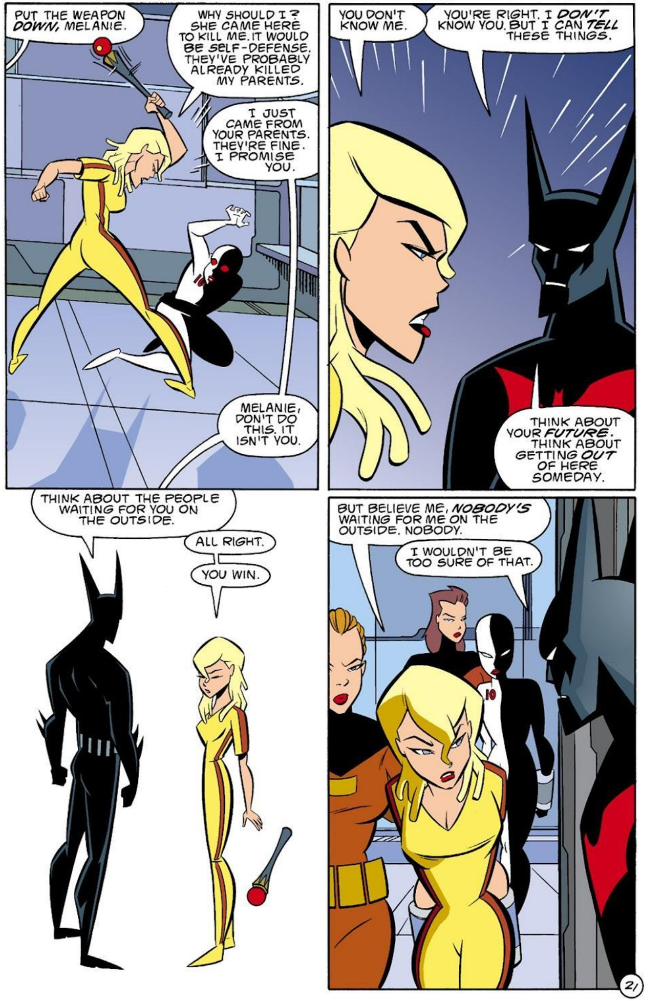
"FROM THE ADDRESS I'D SAY THEY'RE DOING A LITTLE TOO WELL FOR A COUPLE OF EX CONS."
I'M HERE. BUT IT LOOKS LIKE THERE'S NOBODY HOME.
KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN.
DON'T WORRY. YOU DON'T HAVE TO WARN ME EVERY TIME I GO IN SOMEWHERE. I'LL KNOW IF THERE'S A--
--TRAP!
UNGH!!!
PWOK
BOK
PUK
BLOK
YOU WERE SAYING?
BOKSH!
NOTHING. FORGET I SAID ANYTHING. JUST KEEP REMINDING ME.
HMMM. BLUEPRINTS.
OF THE COURTHOUSE. I GUESS WE KNOW WHERE THEIR NEXT JOB WILL BE. BUT WHY?
THE PAROLE BOARD MEETS HERE. THEY'RE GOING TO GET MELANIE AND HER FOLKS OUT OF CUSTODY. REUNITE THE REAL ROYAL FLUSH GANG.
WHA--?
THEY'RE GOING AFTER MELANIE AND HER FOLKS, ALL RIGHT. BUT THEY'RE NOT GOING THERE TO FREE THEM.
16


THE NEXT CASE IS BEFORE THE PAROLE BOARD. PRISONERS WILL PLEASE BE SEATED.
YES. PLEASE DO BE SEATED. THIS WON'T TAKE LONG.
WELL, BROTHER. IT DIDN'T TAKE YOU LONG TO USURP MY PLACE.
NO? IT SEEMS TO ME IT'S TAKEN A VERY LONG TIME.
ahhh!
RUN!
OUR WHOLE LIVES WE HAVE LIVED IN YOUR SHADOWS.
BUT NO MORE. ONCE YOU ARE TAKEN CARE OF, WE WILL BE THE TRUE ROYAL FLUSH GANG.
AND YOU WILL BE BUT A MEMORY.
ENOUGH. I DIDN'T SIGN ON TO HELP YOU CONQUER YOUR SIBLING RIVALRIES. ARE WE TAKING THEM OUT OR NOT?
SWERSH
I'D SAY NOT!
SWERSH
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO SPOIL THIS FOR US. THIS IS OUR DAY OF TRIUMPH.
GET HIM, ACE!
BATMAN, WE HAVE TO HAVE WEAPONS.

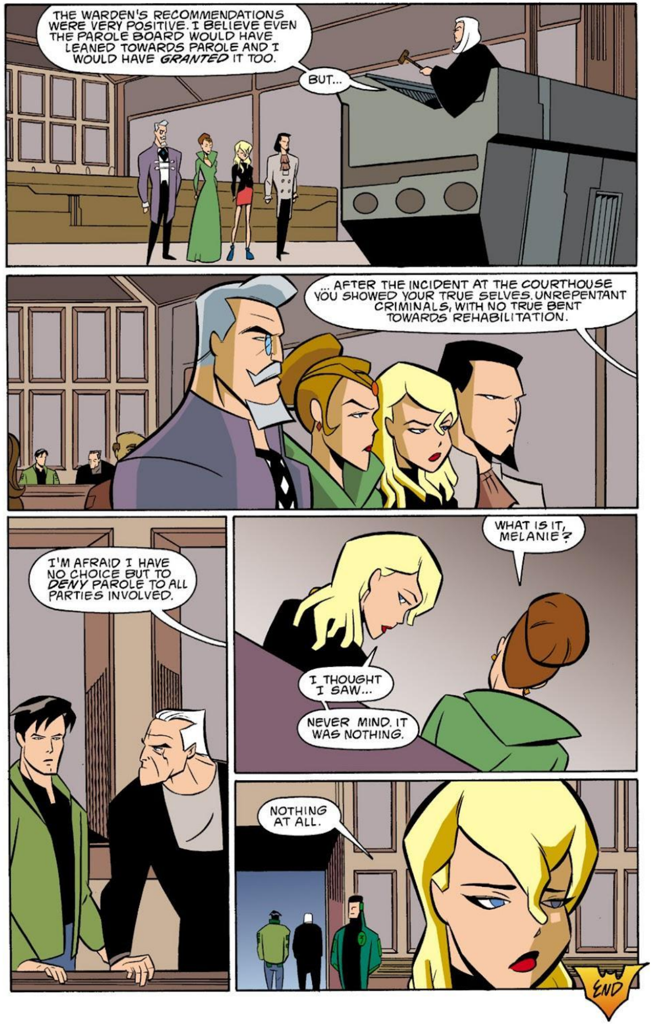

CHUNK
ZZZZT!
QUICK. GET TO THE WEAPON--- YAHH!
ALL RIGHT. YOU'VE GOT YOUR GUNS.
HURNH!
NOW HURRY. WE COULD USE SOME HELP OVER--
--HERE.
AND I WAS EXPECTING A LITTLE GRATITUDE FOR SAVING YOUR LIVES.
LIVE AND LEARN, BATMAN.
YOU DO KNOW THAT THE WEAPONS WON'T WORK WITHOUT A CHARGE PACK? THEY KEEP THEM UNLOADED JUST IN CASE SOMETHING LIKE THIS HAPPENS.
YOU'RE LYING.

PLINK!
THIS ISN'T GOING TO LOOK GOOD ON YOUR PAROLE REPORT.
TEN? WHERE'S YOUR TEN?
GO FISH!
IF SHE DOES ANYTHING TO HURT MELANIE...
Gack! Ghasp!
LET ME GO, I'LL KILL HER. I'LL KILL HER!
IT'S OVER. GIVE IT UP.
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND. I CAN'T. MELANIE! MY BABY!
SHE'S IN DANGER!
SMACK!
WAP!
HAD ENOUGH?

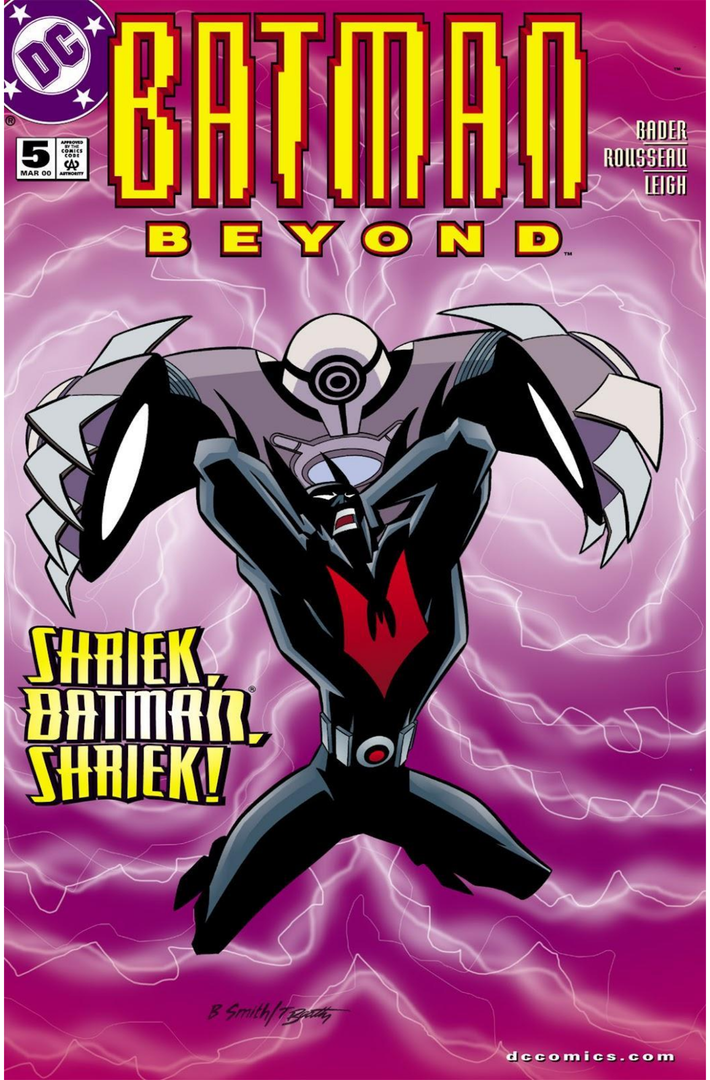

SWAP!
SMACK!
OOF UNGH. OW.
YOU THOUGHT YOUR BRANCH OF THE FAMILY WAS SO TOUGH, huh!
HURRY! SHE'S KILLING HER IN THERE!
IT'S NOT WORKING! SHE MUST HAVE JAMMED IT. GONNA HAVE TO BREAK THE DOOR DOWN.
UNGH!
IT'S NO USE. IT'S DOUBLE HARDENED. WE'LL NEVER GET INSIDE IN TIME!
LET ME THROUGH.
HOPE WE'RE NOT TOO LATE.
NO, PLEASE. I'M SORRY. JUST DON'T HURT ME!
CRASH!
MELANIE!



PUT THE WEAPON *DOWN,* MELANIE.
WHY SHOULD I? SHE CAME HERE TO KILL ME. IT WOULD BE *SELF*-DEFENSE. THEY'VE PROBABLY ALREADY KILLED MY PARENTS.
I JUST CAME FROM YOUR PARENTS. THEY'RE FINE. I PROMISE YOU.
MELANIE, DON'T DO THIS. IT ISN'T YOU.
YOU DON'T KNOW ME.
YOU'RE RIGHT. I *DON'T* KNOW YOU. BUT I *CAN TELL* THESE THINGS.
THINK ABOUT YOUR *FUTURE*. THINK ABOUT GETTING *OUT* OF HERE SOMEDAY.
THINK ABOUT THE PEOPLE WAITING FOR YOU ON THE OUTSIDE.
ALL RIGHT.
YOU WIN.
BUT BELIEVE ME, *NOBODY'S* WAITING FOR ME ON THE OUTSIDE. NOBODY.
I WOULDN'T BE TOO SURE OF THAT.



THE WARDEN'S RECOMMENDATIONS WERE VERY POSITIVE. I BELIEVE EVEN THE PAROLE BOARD WOULD HAVE LEANED TOWARDS PAROLE AND I WOULD HAVE *GRANTED* IT TOO.
BUT...
...AFTER THE INCIDENT AT THE COURTHOUSE YOU SHOWED YOUR TRUE SELVES. UNREPENTANT CRIMINALS, WITH NO TRUE BENT TOWARDS REHABILITATION.
I'M AFRAID I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO *DENY* PAROLE TO ALL PARTIES INVOLVED.
WHAT IS IT, MELANIE?
I THOUGHT I SAW...
NEVER MIND. IT WAS NOTHING.
NOTHING AT ALL.
END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BATMAN
BEYOND
5
MAR 00
BADER
ROUSSEAU
LEIGH
SHRIEK, BATMAN, SHRIEK!
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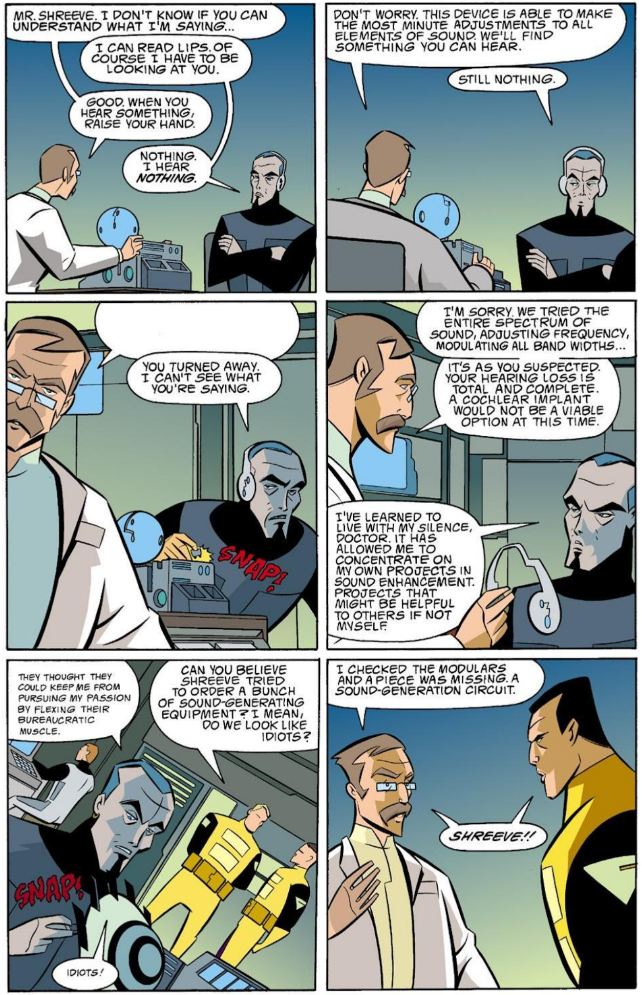
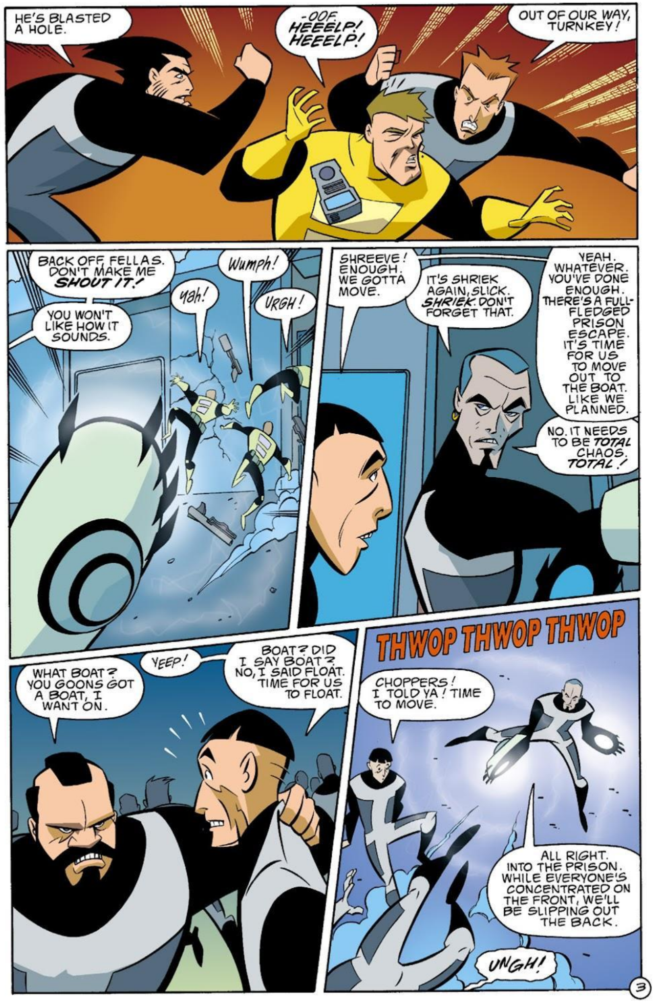
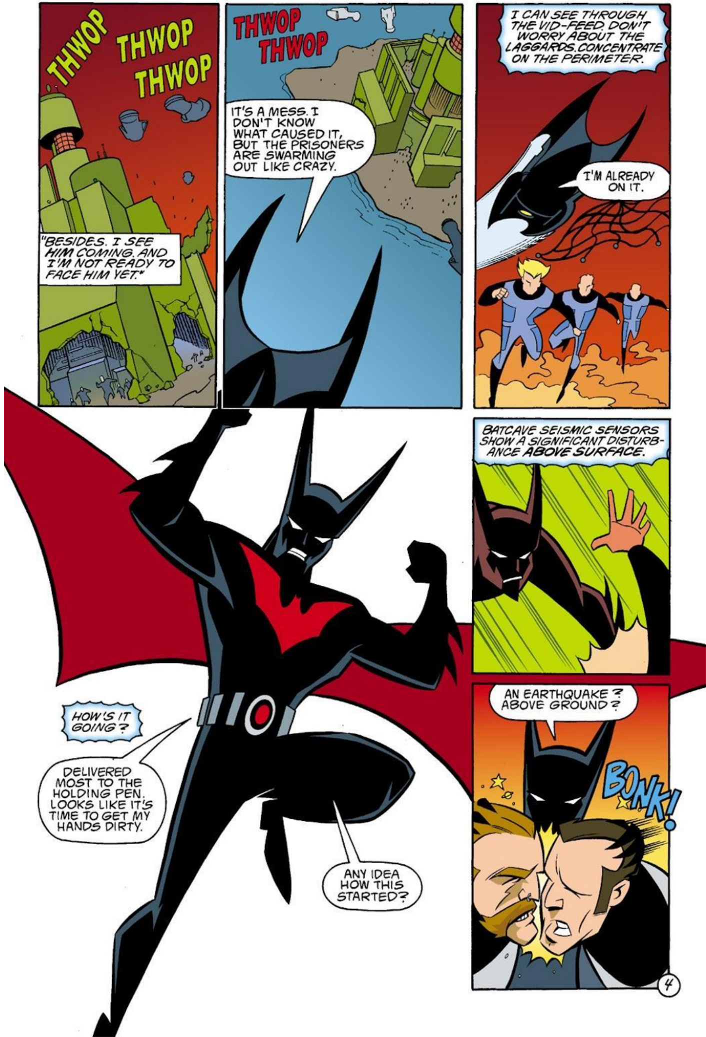


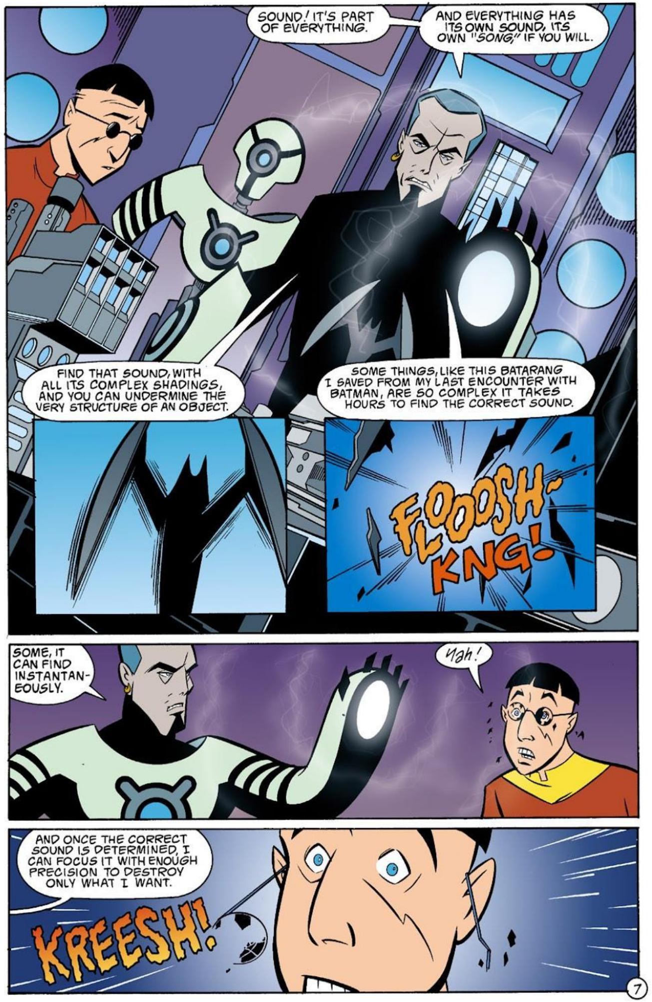
CONVERSION BY WILDSTORM


HE'S BLASTED A HOLE.
-OOF. HEEELP! HEEELP!
OUT OF OUR WAY, TURNKEY!
BACK OFF, FELLAS. DON'T MAKE ME SHOUT IT!
YOU WON'T LIKE HOW IT SOUNDS.
Yah!
Wumph!
URGH!
SHREEVE! ENOUGH. WE GOTTA MOVE.
IT'S SHRIEK AGAIN, SLICK. SHRIEK. DON'T FORGET THAT.
YEAH. WHATEVER. YOU'VE DONE ENOUGH. THERE'S A FULL-FLEDGED PRISON ESCAPE. IT'S TIME FOR US TO MOVE OUT TO THE BOAT. LIKE WE PLANNED.
NO. IT NEEDS TO BE TOTAL CHAOS. TOTAL!
WHAT BOAT? YOU GOONS GOT A BOAT, I WANT ON.
YEEP!
BOAT? DID I SAY BOAT? NO, I SAID FLOAT. TIME FOR US TO FLOAT.
THWOP THWOP THWOP
CHOPPERS! I TOLD YA! TIME TO MOVE.
ALL RIGHT. INTO THE PRISON. WHILE EVERYONE'S CONCENTRATED ON THE FRONT, WE'LL BE SLIPPING OUT THE BACK.
UNGH!
3


THWOP
THWOP
THWOP
"BESIDES. I SEE HIM COMING. AND I'M NOT READY TO FACE HIM YET."
THWOP
THWOP
IT'S A MESS. I DON'T KNOW WHAT CAUSED IT, BUT THE PRISONERS ARE SWARMING OUT LIKE CRAZY.
I CAN SEE THROUGH THE VID-FEED. DON'T WORRY ABOUT THE LAGGARDS. CONCENTRATE ON THE PERIMETER.
I'M ALREADY ON IT.
HOW'S IT GOING?
DELIVERED MOST TO THE HOLDING PEN. LOOKS LIKE IT'S TIME TO GET MY HANDS DIRTY.
ANY IDEA HOW THIS STARTED?
BATCAVE SEISMIC SENSORS SHOW A SIGNIFICANT DISTURBANCE ABOVE SURFACE.
AN EARTHQUAKE? ABOVE GROUND?
BONK!
4

NO. BUT SOUND WAVES CAN SOMETIMES READ AS SEISMIC IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT TO LOOK FOR.
OOOF!
WHICH YOU, OF COURSE, DO.
YES. AND THIS HAS A DEFINITE SONAR SIGNATURE.
SHREEVE!
AND HE'S NOT AMONG THE RECOVERED PRISONERS.
"I'M BETTING THIS WHOLE THING WAS A DISTRACTION FOR HIS ESCAPE."
HOW WE GONNA GET THROUGH THE DOOR?
HAVE YOU NOT BEEN PAYING ATTENTION? WHAT DO YOU THINK THIS IS? NOW GET IN THE SUB.
BUT I'M CLAUSTROPHOBIC.
THEN DROWN.
BOOM!
Yaaaah!
SHRUSSSSS
HISSS
SPLUSHH!

YEEEH! DOESN'T THAT BOTHER YOU? IT'S WORSE THAN FINGERNAILS ON A BLACKBOARD.
I'M DEAF, IDIOT. NOTHING BOTHERS ME.
SCEERRRTCCH!
WE CAN'T AFFORD TO BE SPOTTED BY HIM.
CRASH!
WHO, SHREEVE?
"BATMAN."
THIS IS MY SECOND SWEEP. EVEN IF THEY GOT OFF THE ISLAND, THEY COULDN'T HAVE GOTTEN PAST ME.
HOW ABOUT UNDER YOU?
NOT LIKELY. SONAR WOULD HAVE PICKED THEM UP.
UNLESS THEY HAD SOME WAY TO BLOCK THE SONAR LIKE...



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IT WAS SHREEVE, ALL RIGHT. SEEMS HE STOLE A PIECE OF SOUND-GENERATING CIRCUITRY FROM A MEDICAL DEVICE AND WAS ABLE TO MODIFY IT ENOUGH TO RECREATE ANOTHER SOUND BLASTER.
THAT'S WHAT HE USED ON THE WALLS.
BUT HE DIDN'T GO OUT THROUGH THE WALLS. I'M SURE OF IT.
HE AND ANOTHER PRISONER — SLICK GARDNER — ARE THE ONLY TWO PRISONERS UNACCOUNTED FOR, AS IS ONE OF THE PRISON SUBS.
WHY DIDN'T HE JUST KEEP BLASTING HIS WAY OUT?
HE KNEW YOU'D BE THERE SOON ENOUGH AND HE WANTED TO AVOID A CONFRONTATION.
YOU'VE SHOWN A SURPRISING RESISTANCE TO HIS SOUND-GENERATING DEVICES.
BUT IF SOMETHING HE MADE IN PRISON CAN DO THIS, HOW LONG BEFORE HE MAKES AN EVEN MORE POWERFUL WEAPON?
HE'S GOING TO NEED EQUIPMENT. SPECIALIZED CIRCUITRY. NOT THE KIND OF STUFF YOU CAN BUY OVER THE WEB.
BUT THE KIND OF STUFF YOU CAN STEAL IF YOU KNOW WHERE TO GO, RIGHT?

"WE JUST WAIT FOR HIM TO MAKE HIS MOVE. KEEP YOUR CEL PHONE CHARGED."
BEAUTIFUL NIGHT.
ROMANTIC, huh, MAX?
DON'T PUSH IT, GIRARD. THIS IS ONLY OUR FIRST DATE.
KAPLOOSH!
FIREWORKS!
KAPLOOSH! KAPLOOSH!
YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO WAIT TILL AFTER WE KISS TO SAY THAT.
NO. I MEAN REAL FIREWORKS.
WONDER WHAT FOR? IT'S NOT ANY KIND OF HOLIDAY, IS IT?
THOSE AREN'T FIREWORKS. THOSE ARE POLICE SKYCAMS BLOWING UP.
LOOKS LIKE SOMEONE DOESN'T WANT THE COPS TO HAVE A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF WHAT THEY'RE DOING.
UM... SOMEONE SHOULD ALERT THE POLICE, RIGHT TERRY?
GOOD IDEA. I'LL GO.
KAPLOOSH!
WAIT! WHY CAN'T HE JUST USE HIS CEL PHONE?
UM... DEAD BATTERY?

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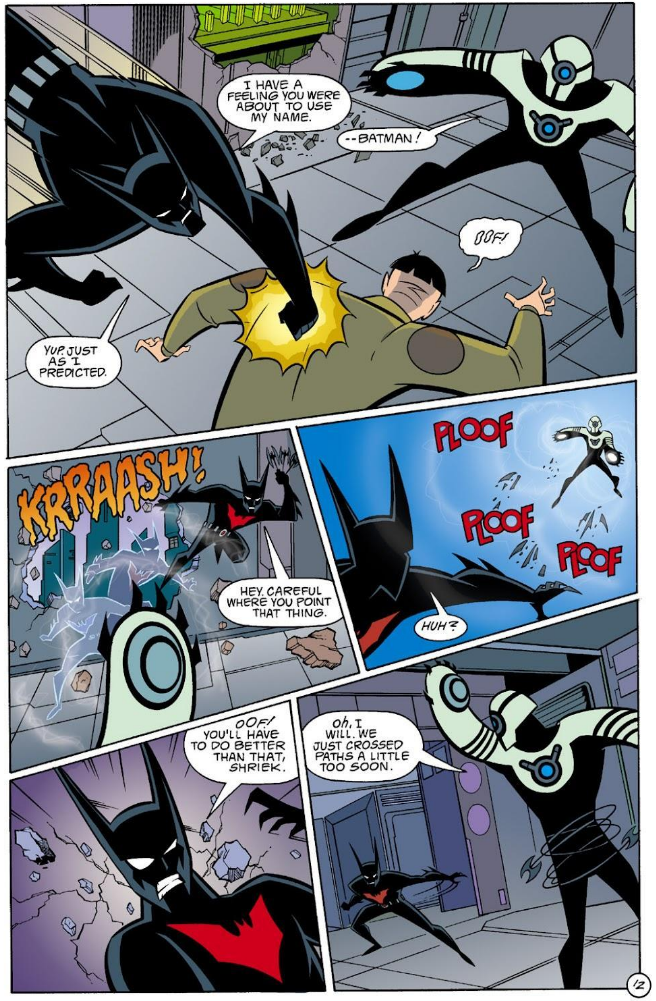
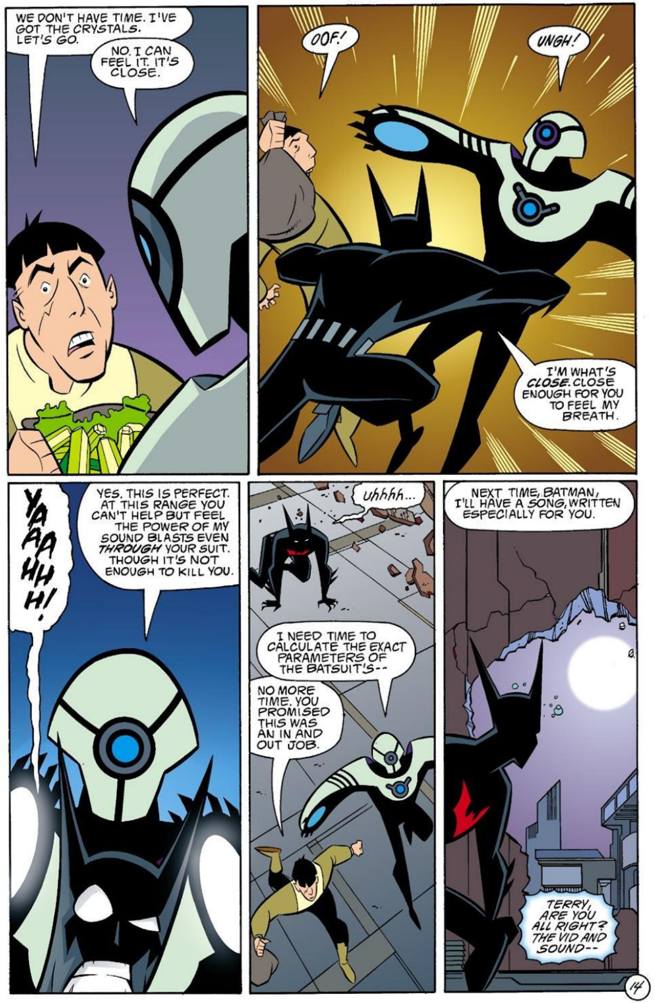
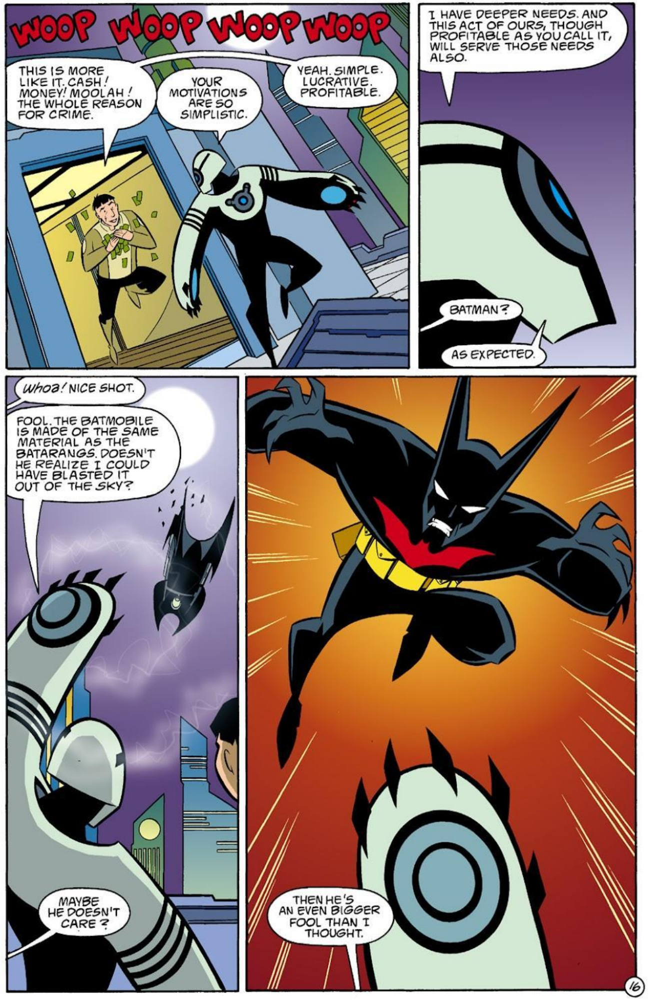
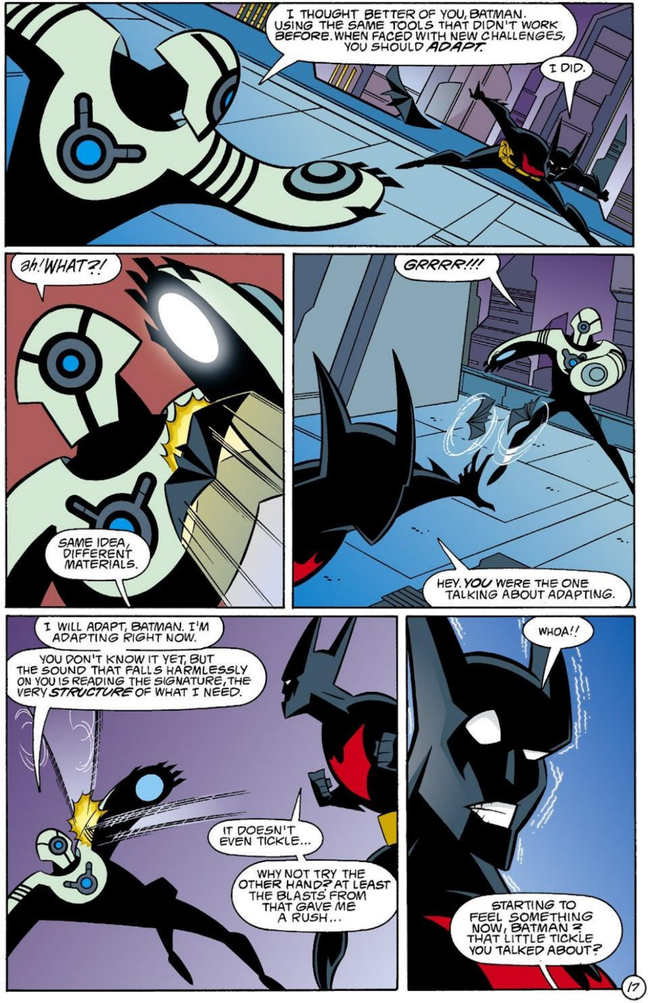


KRARAASH!
AH!
HMMMM MM
UM... HOW?
whoa! THAT TICKLES.
GET THE CRYSTALS, SLICK!
SNAP
PING
PING PING PING
UGhNN.
GREAT. MY GEAR IS USELESS AGAINST HIM BUT IT'S TURNING AROUND TO BITE ME.
IF THAT'S YOUR NEW SECRET WEAPON, IT NEEDS WORK.
IT DOESN'T NEED WORK. IT JUST NEEDS TIME.


WE DON'T HAVE TIME. I'VE GOT THE CRYSTALS. LET'S GO.
NO. I CAN FEEL IT. IT'S CLOSE.
OOF!
UNGH!
I'M WHAT'S CLOSE. CLOSE ENOUGH FOR YOU TO FEEL MY BREATH.
YAAAHHH!
YES. THIS IS PERFECT. AT THIS RANGE YOU CAN'T HELP BUT FEEL THE POWER OF MY SOUND BLASTS EVEN THROUGH YOUR SUIT. THOUGH IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO KILL YOU.
uhhhh...
I NEED TIME TO CALCULATE THE EXACT PARAMETERS OF THE BATSUIT'S--
NO MORE TIME. YOU PROMISED THIS WAS AN IN AND OUT JOB.
NEXT TIME, BATMAN, I'LL HAVE A SONG, WRITTEN ESPECIALLY FOR YOU.
TERRY, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? THE VID AND SOUND--

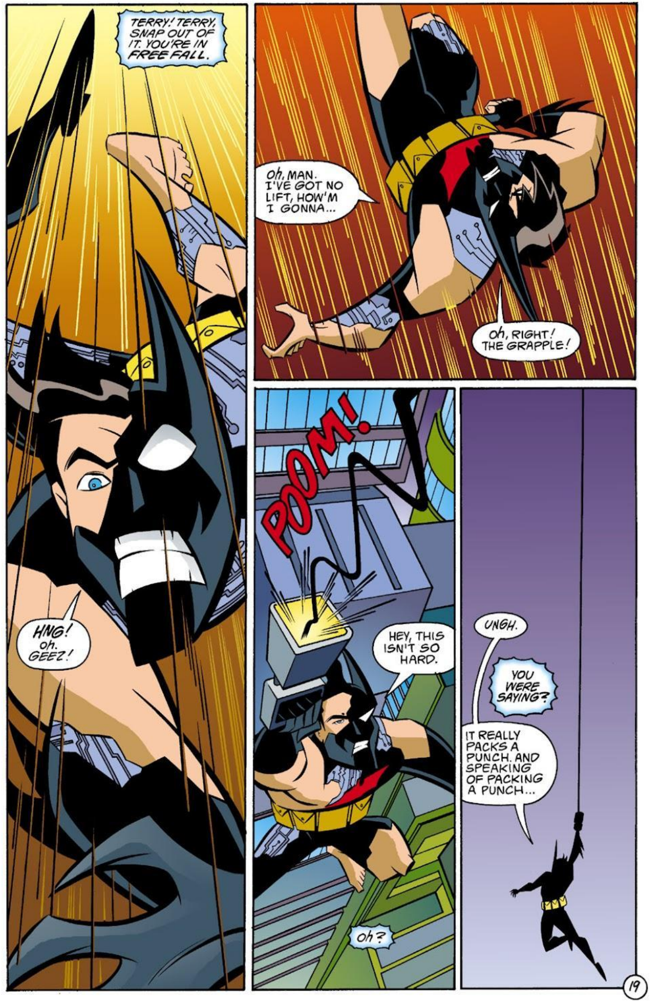
--WENT HAYWIRE FOR A MINUTE.
I LET HIM GET TOO CLOSE. WON'T LET THAT HAPPEN AGAIN.
THE BATARANGS AND EVERYTHING ELSE I THREW AT HIM JUST DISINTEGRATED. ONE SHOT AND POOF.
LOOKS LIKE HE'S FOUND A WAY TO FINE-TUNE THE SOUND BLASTS TO FIT THE MATERIAL HE'S BLASTING.
HE DIDN'T HIT ME WITH ANY FINE TUNING. JUST A LOUD BLAST OF PURE POWER.
HE'S GOT BOTH. POWER WHEN HE NEEDS IT AND FINESSE WHEN HE WANTS IT.
ALL THE NEW EQUIPMENT YOU CARRY IS FABRICATED FROM THE SAME SPECIALLY FORGED ALLOY.
SHRIEK HAS FOUND JUST THE RIGHT SOUND TO VIBRATE THE MOLECULES OF THAT ALLOY UNTIL IT DISINTEGRATES. WHICH MEANS NONE OF YOUR WEAPONS WILL BE OF ANY USE AGAINST HIM.
WHAT'S THIS SUPPOSED TO BE?
SOME OF MY OLD WEAPONS AND TOOLS. ALL MADE OUT OF MATERIALS SHRIEK WILL NOT BE ANTICIPATING.
YOU DON'T REALLY EXPECT ME TO WEAR THIS, DO YOU? IT'S TOTALLY OLD-FASHIONED.
EXACTLY.
AND WHAT'S THIS?
A BATGRAPPLE... IN CASE YOU NEED IT. BUT BE CAREFUL. IT'S HARDER TO USE THAN YOU THINK.

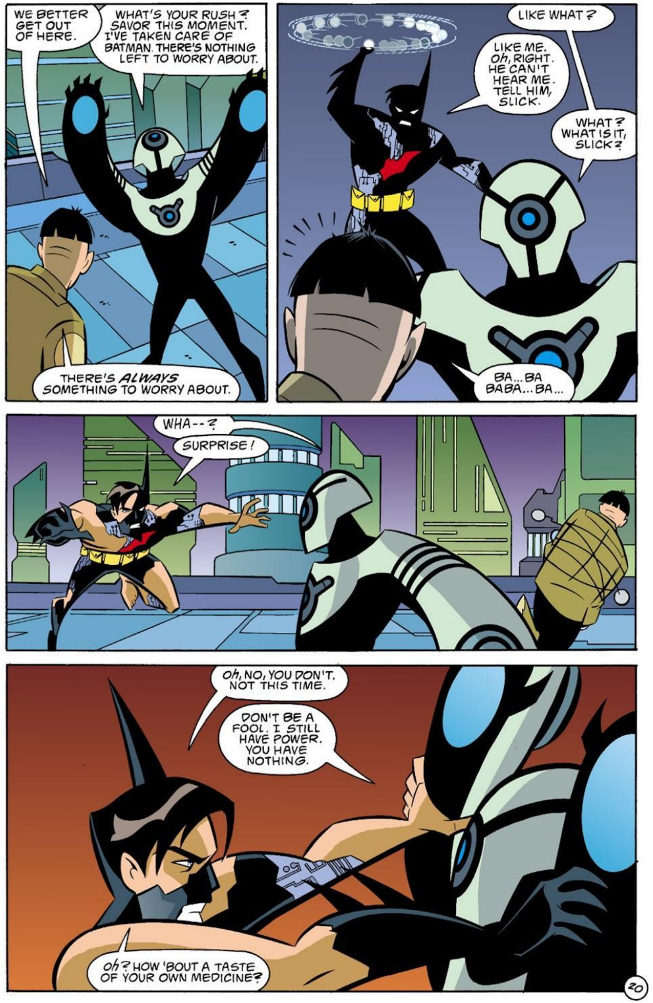

WOOP WOOP WOOP WOOP
THIS IS MORE LIKE IT. CASH! MONEY! MOOLAH! THE WHOLE REASON FOR CRIME.
YOUR MOTIVATIONS ARE SO SIMPLISTIC.
YEAH. SIMPLE. LUCRATIVE. PROFITABLE.
I HAVE DEEPER NEEDS. AND THIS ACT OF OURS, THOUGH PROFITABLE AS YOU CALL IT, WILL SERVE THOSE NEEDS ALSO.
BATMAN?
AS EXPECTED.
Whoa! NICE SHOT.
FOOL. THE BATMOBILE IS MADE OF THE SAME MATERIAL AS THE BATARANGS. DOESN'T HE REALIZE I COULD HAVE BLASTED IT OUT OF THE SKY?
MAYBE HE DOESN'T CARE?
THEN HE'S AN EVEN BIGGER FOOL THAN I THOUGHT.



I THOUGHT BETTER OF YOU, BATMAN. USING THE SAME TOOLS THAT DIDN'T WORK BEFORE. WHEN FACED WITH NEW CHALLENGES, YOU SHOULD *ADAPT*.
I DID.
ah! WHAT?!
SAME IDEA, DIFFERENT MATERIALS.
GRRRR!!!
HEY. *YOU* WERE THE ONE TALKING ABOUT ADAPTING.
I WILL ADAPT, BATMAN. I'M ADAPTING RIGHT NOW.
YOU DON'T KNOW IT YET, BUT THE SOUND THAT FALLS HARMLESSLY ON YOU IS READING THE SIGNATURE, THE VERY *STRUCTURE* OF WHAT I NEED.
IT DOESN'T EVEN TICKLE...
WHY NOT TRY THE OTHER HAND? AT LEAST THE BLASTS FROM THAT GAVE ME A RUSH...
WHOA!!
STARTING TO FEEL SOMETHING NOW, BATMAN? THAT LITTLE TICKLE YOU TALKED ABOUT?

ah... WHAT THE... I CAN'T CONTROL...
YES, THAT'S RIGHT, BATMAN.
I'VE ALMOST FOUND THE RIGHT SOUND. YOUR LAST DEFENSE IS ABOUT TO FALL.
KALOOOF!
UNG!
YOUR PRECIOUS SUIT.
WHAT? THIS OLD THING?
GLAD I WORE CLEAN UNDERWEAR.
LAUGH, BATMAN. BUT NOW YOU'VE GOT NOTHING TO PROTECT YOU FROM THIS.
hungh!


TERRY! TERRY, SNAP OUT OF IT. YOU'RE IN FREE FALL.
HNG! Oh. GEEZ!
Oh, MAN. I'VE GOT NO LIFT, HOW'M I GONNA...
Oh, RIGHT! THE GRAPPLE!
POOM!
HEY, THIS ISN'T SO HARD.
Oh?
UNGH.
YOU WERE SAYING?
IT REALLY PACKS A PUNCH. AND SPEAKING OF PACKING A PUNCH...


WE BETTER GET OUT OF HERE.
WHAT'S YOUR RUSH? SAVOR THIS MOMENT. I'VE TAKEN CARE OF BATMAN. THERE'S NOTHING LEFT TO WORRY ABOUT.
THERE'S ALWAYS SOMETHING TO WORRY ABOUT.
LIKE WHAT?
LIKE ME. Oh, RIGHT. HE CAN'T HEAR ME. TELL HIM, SLICK.
WHAT? WHAT IS IT, SLICK?
BA...BA BABA...BA...
WHA--?
SURPRISE!
Oh, NO, YOU DON'T. NOT THIS TIME.
DON'T BE A FOOL. I STILL HAVE POWER. YOU HAVE NOTHING.
Oh? HOW 'BOUT A TASTE OF YOUR OWN MEDICINE?

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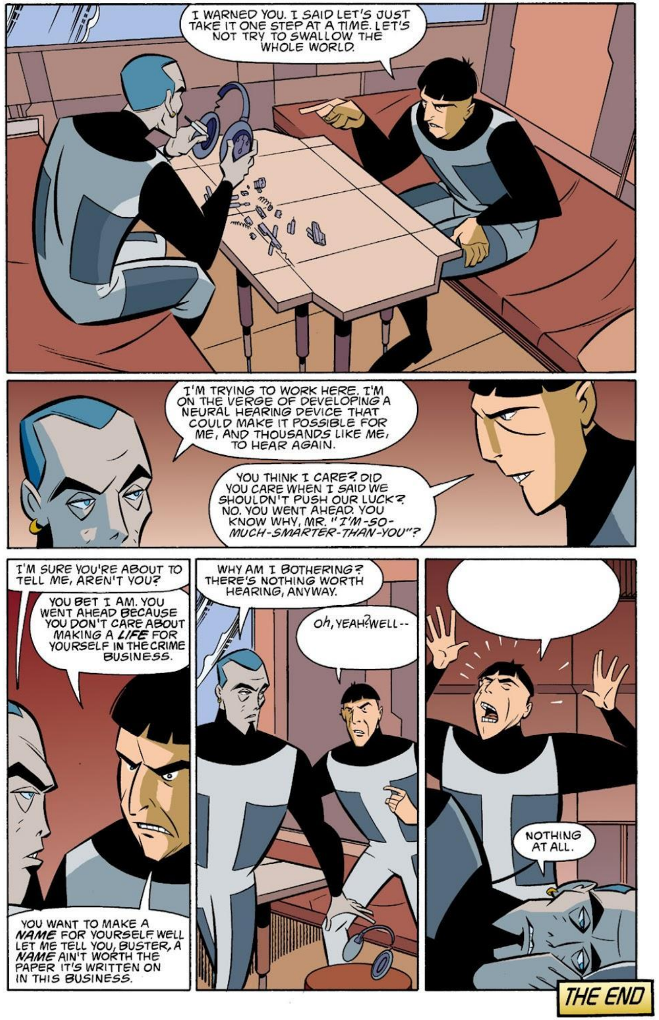

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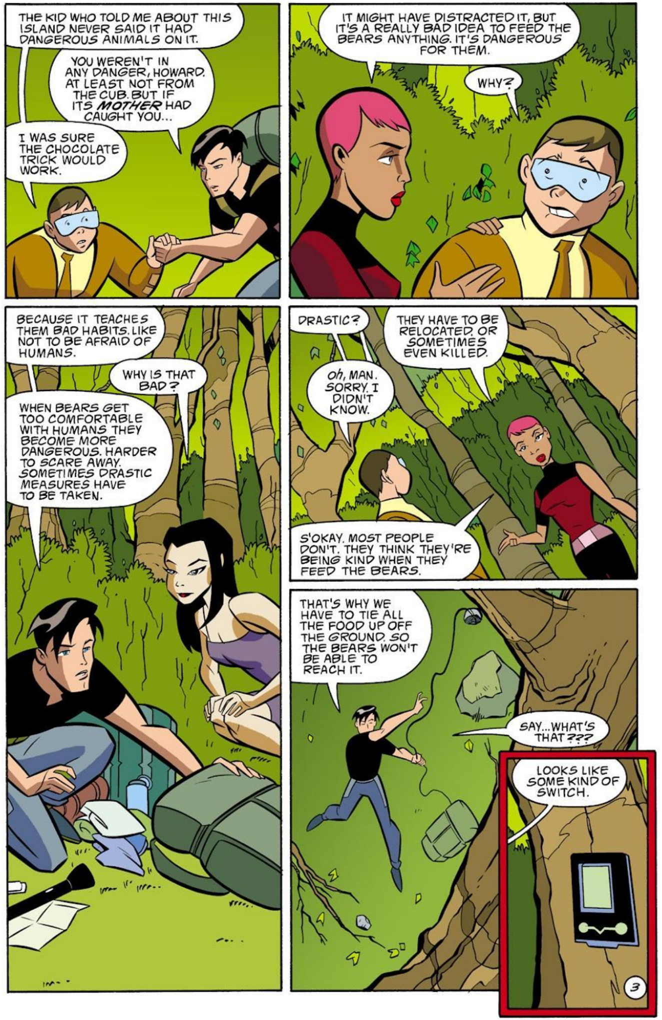
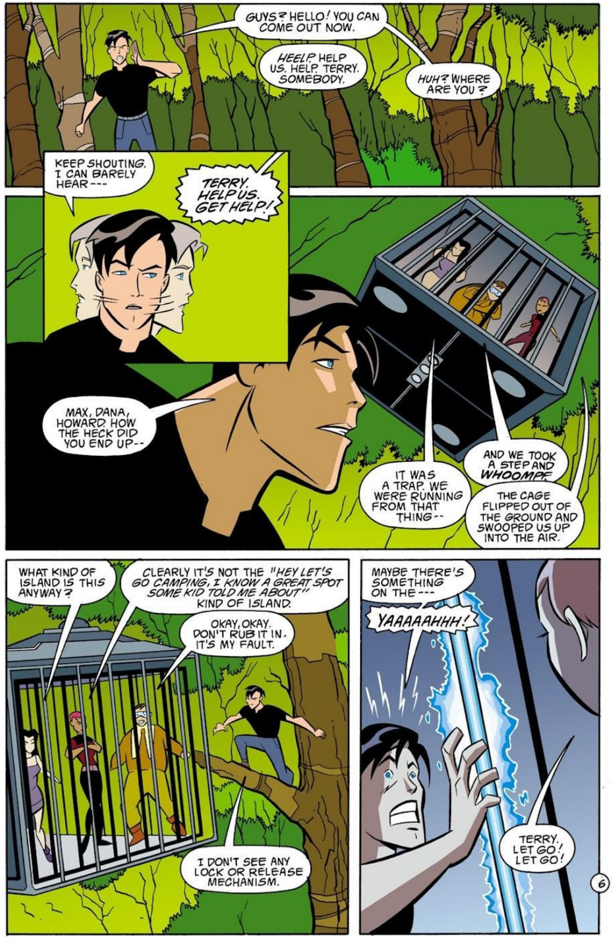

THE KID WHO TOLD ME ABOUT THIS ISLAND NEVER SAID IT HAD DANGEROUS ANIMALS ON IT.
YOU WEREN'T IN ANY DANGER, HOWARD. AT LEAST NOT FROM THE CUB. BUT IF ITS MOTHER HAD CAUGHT YOU...
I WAS SURE THE CHOCOLATE TRICK WOULD WORK.
IT MIGHT HAVE DISTRACTED IT, BUT IT'S A REALLY BAD IDEA TO FEED THE BEARS ANYTHING. IT'S DANGEROUS FOR THEM.
WHY?
BECAUSE IT TEACHES THEM BAD HABITS. LIKE NOT TO BE AFRAID OF HUMANS.
WHY IS THAT BAD?
WHEN BEARS GET TOO COMFORTABLE WITH HUMANS THEY BECOME MORE DANGEROUS. HARDER TO SCARE AWAY. SOMETIMES DRASTIC MEASURES HAVE TO BE TAKEN.
DRASTIC?
THEY HAVE TO BE RELOCATED. OR SOMETIMES EVEN KILLED.
Oh, MAN. SORRY. I DIDN'T KNOW.
S'OKAY. MOST PEOPLE DON'T. THEY THINK THEY'RE BEING KIND WHEN THEY FEED THE BEARS.
THAT'S WHY WE HAVE TO TIE ALL THE FOOD UP OFF THE GROUND. SO THE BEARS WON'T BE ABLE TO REACH IT.
SAY...WHAT'S THAT???
LOOKS LIKE SOME KIND OF SWITCH.
3

THAT KID TOLD ME THIS ISLAND WAS SUPPOSED TO BE DESERTED.
"THAT KID" DIDN'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT THIS PLACE. YOU SURE THIS IS THE ISLAND HE WAS TALKING ABOUT?
UM... MAYBE WE WERE SUPPOSED TO TAKE THE NORTH FORK ON THE RIVER.
NORTH! GREAT. WE SHOULD HAVE PAID MORE ATTENTION TO THE "PRIVATE PROPERTY, NO TRESPASSING OR ELSE" SIGNS.
COME ON. IT COULD BE ANYTHING. SOMETHING LEFT BEHIND BY SOME OTHER CAMPERS. WHO KNOWS?
ONE WAY TO FIND OUT.
HOWARD, NO. DON'T BE STU---
KATHUNK!
ROOAARRR!! GROWL!! GRRRRRR.
UM...!
I THINK THAT WAS A MISTAKE.
UM...UM...UM...
WHAT IS IT NOW---? oh!
NRRRGG! RAAARHGG!
NO. DON'T RUN. IT'S A CHASER. IT'S A---
YAAAAAA!!
oh SLAG IT! NOW I'M GOING TO HAVE TO LEAD IT AWAY.
GRRRR!
YO! BIG GUY. THIS WAY. CHASE ME! CHASE...
WHO KNEW YOU'D LISTEN TO ME SO QUICKLY.
4



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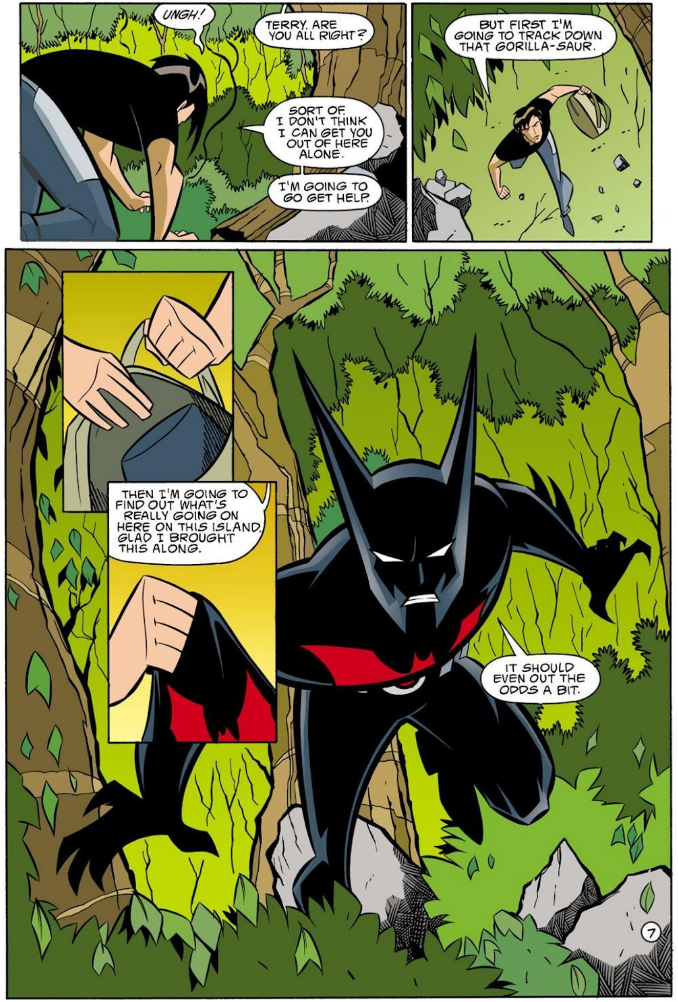
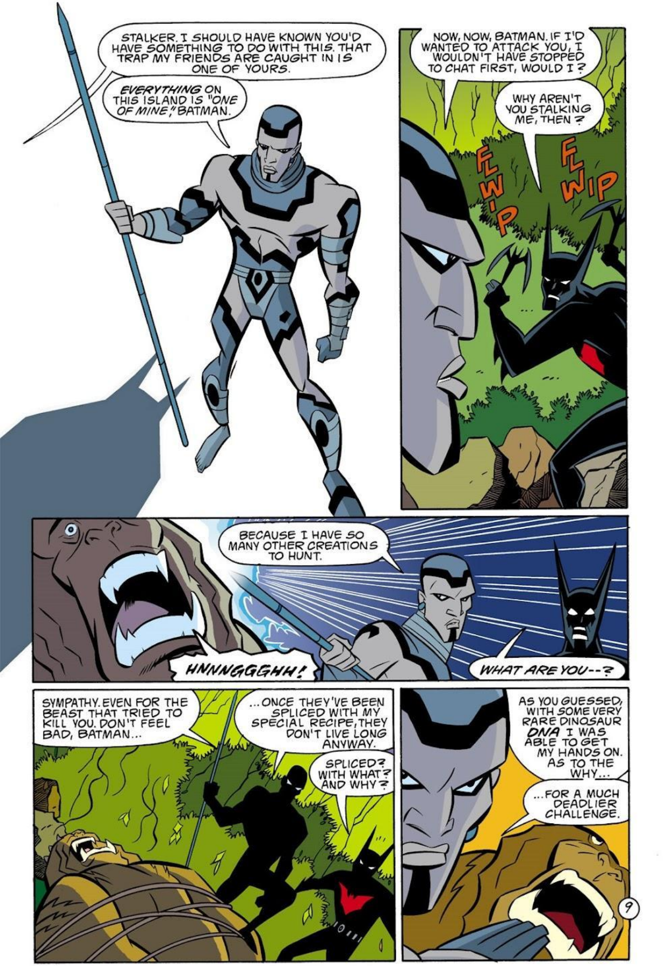

UNGH!
TERRY, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
SORT OF. I DON'T THINK I CAN GET YOU OUT OF HERE ALONE.
I'M GOING TO GO GET HELP.
BUT FIRST I'M GOING TO TRACK DOWN THAT GORILLA-SAUR.
THEN I'M GOING TO FIND OUT WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON HERE ON THIS ISLAND. GLAD I BROUGHT THIS ALONG.
IT SHOULD EVEN OUT THE ODDS A BIT.
7

THAT'S IT. JUST ONE STEP CLOSER.
ROOOAARR!
GOTCHA, CHIMP!
Oh, STOP GLITCHING. IT DOESN'T HURT.
GRRR.
WHAT THE HECK ARE YOU? PART GORILLA, THAT'S FOR SURE. BUT SOMETHING ELSE HAS GOT SPLICED INTO...
Oh, NO. IT CAN'T BE TRUE. CAN IT? ARE YOU PART DINOSAUR? BUT HOW? WHERE DID THEY GET THE DNA? AND WHO WOULD--?
I CAN ANSWER ALL THOSE QUESTIONS FOR YOU, BATMAN.
8



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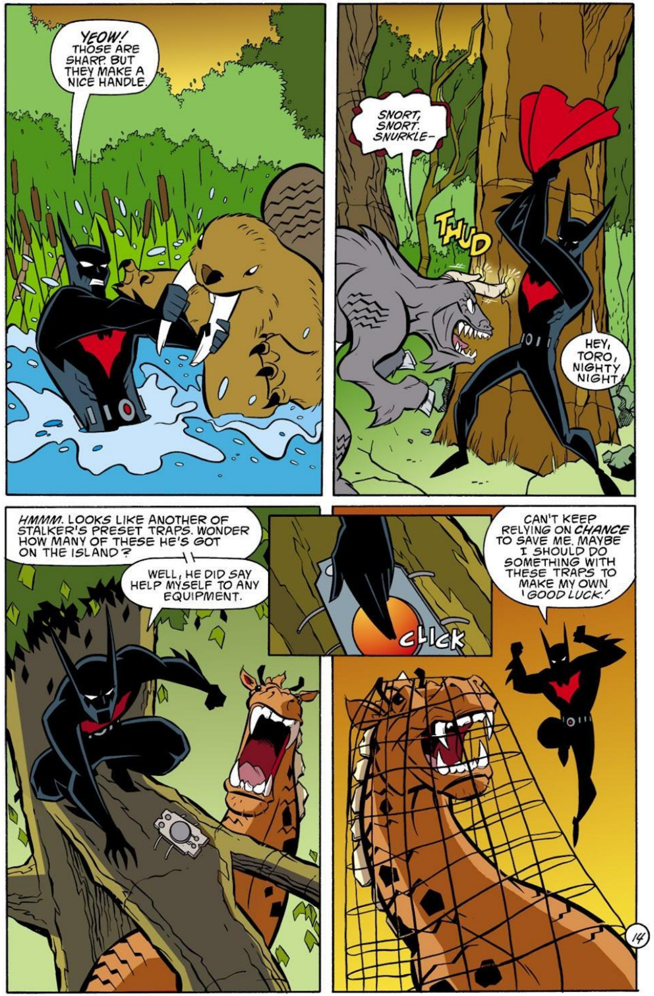
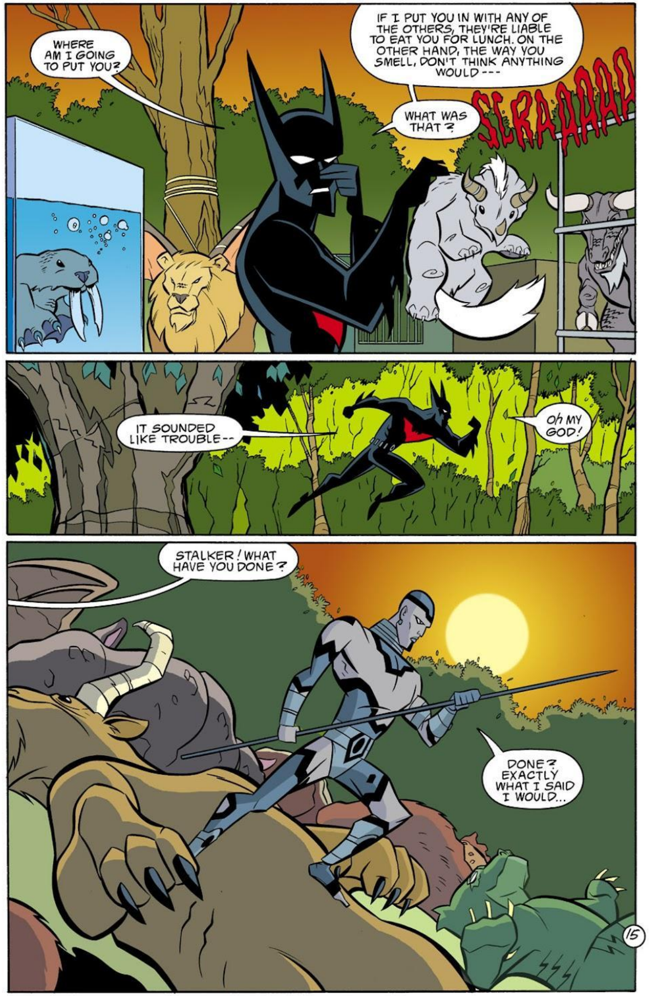
TO THE HUNT, THEN.
WAIT. HOW WILL I KNOW WHEN WE'RE FINISHED?
YOU'LL KNOW IF YOU SURVIVE THAT LONG.
SCREE
SCREE
OOF.
CRASH
BE A NICE KITTY, NOW. I DON'T WANT TO HAVE TO HURT...
SCREE
Whoa!
NEXT TIME I'LL REMEMBER TO BRING SOME CATNIP WITH ME INTO THE JUNGLE --
SCROAR
Oh, BY THE WAY. FEEL FREE TO USE ANY OF THE EQUIPMENT YOU FIND ON THE ISLAND. TRAPS. WEAPONS. I DO WANT THIS TO BE A FAIR CONTEST.
--UNGH!
SCREE
11

GENEROUS TO A FAULT, AREN'T---
YAAAH!
ITS CLAWS ARE AS HARD AS STEEL AND AS SHARP AS A RAZOR'S EDGE.
MY LION-DACTYL. AN INTERESTING COMBINATION, DON'T YOU THINK?
SCREEEROAR
AURGHH! AREN'T YOU GOING TO HELP?
THAT WOULDN'T BE FAIR EITHER, WOULD IT, BATMAN?
LET'S SEE HOW WELL YOU FLY---
SCREEEE!
---BLIND!
12

HEY, PUDDY. WOULDN'T IT BE SMARTER TO LET ME--
uh oh!
SKWAWK
OOF!
oh, GREAT.
MIDAIR RESCUE. MY FAVORITE.
GOTCHA! UNGH. HEAVY.
OKAY, FELLA. YOU'RE ONE. NOW THERE'RE ...I DON'T KNOW HOW MANY MORE TO GO!
13


YEOW! THOSE ARE SHARP. BUT THEY MAKE A NICE HANDLE.
SNORT, SNORT. SNURKLE–
THUD
HEY, TORO, NIGHTY NIGHT.
HMMM. LOOKS LIKE ANOTHER OF STALKER'S PRESET TRAPS. WONDER HOW MANY OF THESE HE'S GOT ON THE ISLAND?
WELL, HE DID SAY HELP MYSELF TO ANY EQUIPMENT.
CLICK
CAN'T KEEP RELYING ON CHANCE TO SAVE ME. MAYBE I SHOULD DO SOMETHING WITH THESE TRAPS TO MAKE MY OWN 'GOOD LUCK.'
14


WHERE AM I GOING TO PUT YOU?
IF I PUT YOU IN WITH ANY OF THE OTHERS, THEY'RE LIABLE TO EAT YOU FOR LUNCH. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE WAY YOU SMELL, DON'T THINK ANYTHING WOULD---
WHAT WAS THAT?
IT SOUNDED LIKE TROUBLE--
Oh MY GOD!
STALKER! WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?
DONE? EXACTLY WHAT I SAID I WOULD...
15

... HUNTED DOWN MY SHARE OF THE ANIMALS.
THE WAY I COUNT THINGS, I'D SAY WE'VE DONE ABOUT THE SAME.
WE HAVE NOT DONE THE SAME.
CAPTURE/KILL. I DON'T SEE THE BIG DIFFERENCE. IT'S THE HUNT, AFTER ALL, THAT WE'RE AFTER.
THAT YOU'RE AFTER. I'M ONLY LOOKING TO GET ME AND MY FRIENDS OFF THIS ISLAND.
WELL THEN, YOU'LL BE HAPPY TO KNOW THERE'S ONLY ONE BEASTIE LEFT. THE HIPPO-REX.
SNIFF SNIFF SNIFF SNIFF
CAN YOU SMELL THEM? NO. PROBABLY NOT. BUT I CAN. AND SO CAN THE HIPPO-REX. PREY.
ROAR
HOW HELPFUL OF YOU TO TIE UP ALL YOUR ANIMALS AS BAIT FOR THE HIPPO-REX. AT LEAST NOW I KNOW WHERE HE'LL BE HEADING...
Oh NO!
Oh, YES. REMEMBER, BATMAN...
16

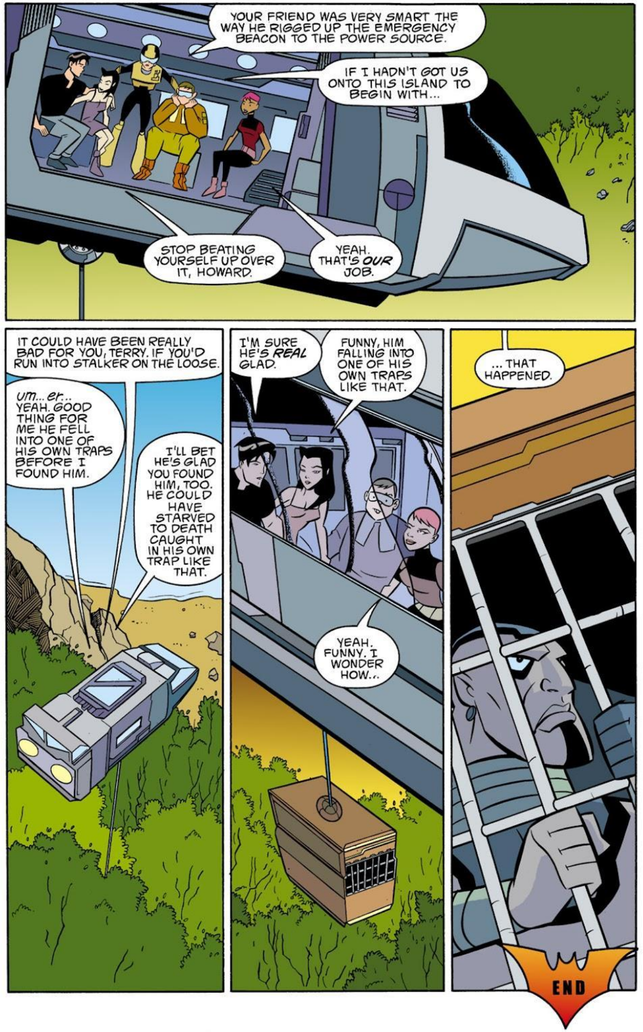
"... THE HIPPO-REX IS MINE."
NO!
BEST TIME TO HUNT BIG GAME, BATMAN. WHEN THEY'RE HUNGRY.
THEY'RE MORE AGGRESSIVE. DESPERATE.
ANGRY. THEY DON'T LIKE TO HAVE DINNER INTERRUPTED.
IT MAKES THE HUNT MORE CHALLENGING.
SNORT!
17

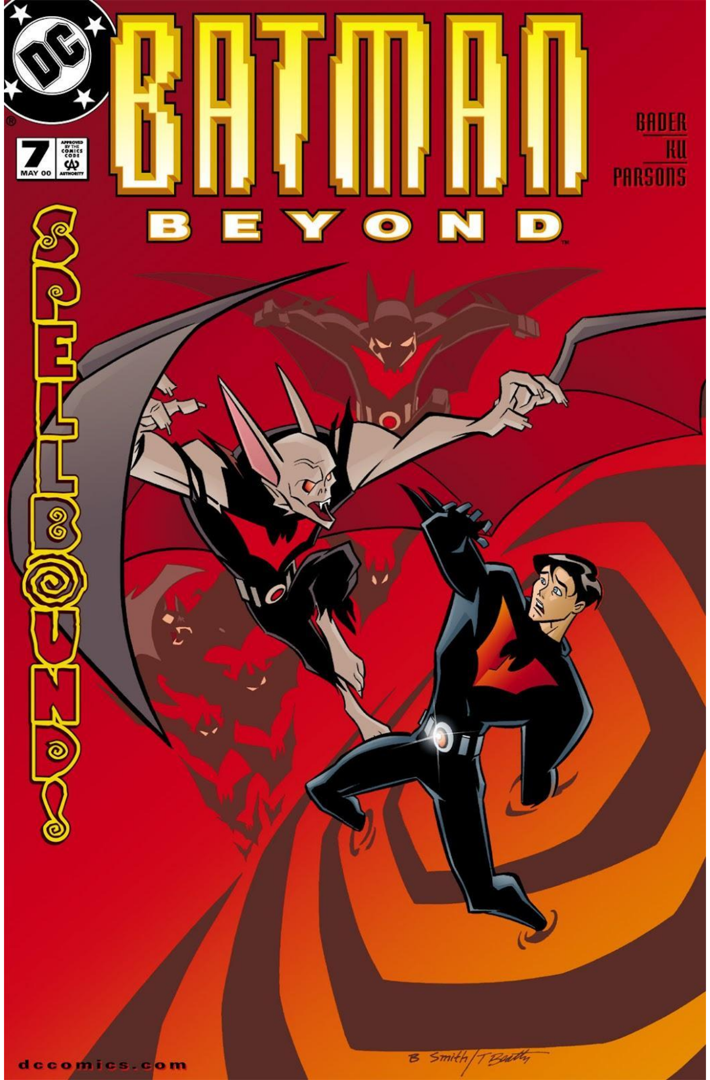
STEEL MESH. TITANIUM ALLOY. BIO GLUE. HE CAN'T ESCAPE IT.
GRUNT!
SNORT SNURKLE
CALM DOWN. IT WILL ALL BE OVER SOON.
NO! I WON'T LET YOU KILL IT.
YOU WON'T LET ME?
WHAT MAKES YOU THINK YOU CAN STOP---
SNAP PING!
PING!
TWANG!
18

NNNGG!
ZZZT!
HNNGH! URRH!
UNGH! UNGH!
I'VE BEEN HERE BEFORE. IT'S NOT OVER YET.
YES IT IS.
WHOOSH WHOOSH
WHOOSH WHOOSH
WHOOSH
WHOOSH

HNNG?!??
NO! NOOOOO!!!
THUNK
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?
USED ONE OF YOUR OWN TRANQ GUNS TO SAVE YOUR MISERABLE LIFE.
ZZZZZZTT!
HE WAS MINE TO HUNT, NOT YOURS!
NOW I HAVE ONLY ONE ANIMAL LEFT TO HUNT IN ITS PLACE. YOU!
WE'VE PLAYED THIS GAME BEFORE, STALKER. AND I WON.

BUT NOT ON MY TURF. I'VE GOT YOU THIS TIME, BATMAN.
Whuh?
AND I'VE GOT *YOU*.
CLICK
I TOOK YOUR ADVICE. BORROWED SOME OF YOUR EQUIPMENT AND DESIGNED A FEW TRAPS OF MY OWN.
NO!
YES. I FIGURED I MIGHT NEED A FEW TRICKS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT. WASN'T GOING TO RELY ON YOUR WORD.
LOOKS LIKE I WIN AGAIN, STALKER.
NOW, TELL ME HOW TO GET HELP OFF THIS ISLAND.
21


YOUR FRIEND WAS VERY SMART THE WAY HE RIGGED UP THE EMERGENCY BEACON TO THE POWER SOURCE.
IF I HADN'T GOT US ONTO THIS ISLAND TO BEGIN WITH...
STOP BEATING YOURSELF UP OVER IT, HOWARD.
YEAH. THAT'S *OUR* JOB.
IT COULD HAVE BEEN REALLY BAD FOR YOU, TERRY, IF YOU'D RUN INTO STALKER ON THE LOOSE.
um...er.. YEAH. GOOD THING FOR ME HE FELL INTO ONE OF HIS OWN TRAPS BEFORE I FOUND HIM.
I'LL BET HE'S GLAD YOU FOUND HIM, TOO. HE COULD HAVE STARVED TO DEATH CAUGHT IN HIS OWN TRAP LIKE THAT.
I'M SURE HE'S *REAL* GLAD.
FUNNY, HIM FALLING INTO ONE OF HIS OWN TRAPS LIKE THAT.
YEAH. FUNNY. I WONDER HOW..
... THAT HAPPENED.
END


DC
BATMAN
BEYOND
BADER
KU
PARSONS
7
MAY 00
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SPELLBOUND
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HELP US! WE'RE SLIPPING!
DON'T PANIC. JUST KEEP HOLDING ON. I'LL TAKE CARE OF THIS MENACE FIRST.
TOO LATE, BATMAN! STINGER HAS TOO MANY BARBS FOR YOU TO CATCH THEM ALL.
THINK SO? WATCH ME!
McGINNIS' SECRET
HILARY J. BADER — WRITER
MIN KU — PENCILER • SEAN PARSONS — INKER
TIM HARKINS — LETTERER
LEE LOUGHRIDGE — COLORIST
FRANK BERRIOS — ASSISTANT EDITOR
JOSEPH ILLIDGE — EDITOR
BATMAN CREATED BY BOB KANE

AHH!
S'MATTER, BATMAN? DOES IT... STING!?! HA, HA, HA.
OOF!
YEAH, IT STINGS. BUT I BET THAT SMARTS EVEN MORE.
HILL HIGH SCHOOL
LOOK OUT!
IT'S GONNA CRUSH US!

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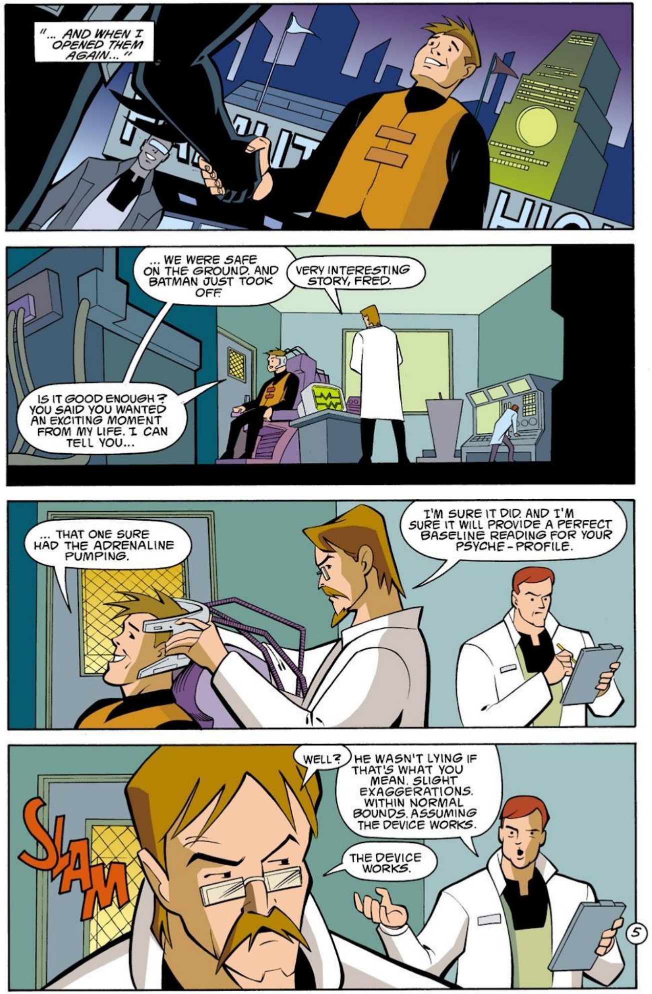
"... AND WHEN I OPENED THEM AGAIN..."
... WE WERE SAFE ON THE GROUND. AND BATMAN JUST TOOK OFF.
VERY INTERESTING STORY, FRED.
IS IT GOOD ENOUGH? YOU SAID YOU WANTED AN EXCITING MOMENT FROM MY LIFE. I CAN TELL YOU...
... THAT ONE SURE HAD THE ADRENALINE PUMPING.
I'M SURE IT DID. AND I'M SURE IT WILL PROVIDE A PERFECT BASELINE READING FOR YOUR PSYCHE-PROFILE.
SLAM
WELL?
HE WASN'T LYING IF THAT'S WHAT YOU MEAN. SLIGHT EXAGGERATIONS. WITHIN NORMAL BOUNDS. ASSUMING THE DEVICE WORKS.
THE DEVICE WORKS.

HOW DID YOU KNOW WHAT TO TELL HIM?
HE HELPS YOU FIND SOMETHING THAT'S REALLY SCARY OR EXCITING.
GEE. I DON'T KNOW WHAT STORY HE'S GONNA LEAD ME TO. NOTHING EXCITING EVER HAPPENS IN MY LIFE.
YEAH. TELL ME ABOUT IT.
YOU'RE NEXT, TER.
BRRRRRRIIING!
Oh. TOO BAD. SCHOOL BELL. GUESS I'LL BE FIRST TOMORROW.
HEY, THIS IS JOKERZ TERRITORY.
SO?
ARE YOU CRAZY? THEY SEE A PATSY LIKE YOU ON A BIKE AND YOU MIGHT AS WELL SAY GOODBYE TO IT.
I CAN TAKE CARE OF MY---
HEE HEE, HEE, HAW, HEE HAW.
Whoa! I'M LOSING CONTROL.
NO KIDDING.
GONNA HAVE TO PUT HER DOWN. JUMP!

HEY, SCAR, LOOKS LIKE WE GOT TWO TOLL JUMPERS WHO'RE DELINQUENT ON THEIR PAYMENTS.
WE DON'T HAVE ANY MONEY, SO YOU MIGHT AS WELL JUST LEAVE US ALONE.
NO MONEY, huh? LET'S SEE WHAT THEY'VE GOT IN THEIR POCKETS.
HEY. HEY. HEY!
WELL, WELL, WELL. LOOKS LIKE ENOUGH TO PAY THE TOLL.
NEXT TIME, YOU PAY BEFORE YOU COME THROUGH JOKER LAND, CAP?
YEAH, YEAH. I CAP. CAN I HAVE MY BIKE NOW?
FORFEIT. BELONGS TO US NOW.
YOU CAN'T TAKE THAT. IT'S MINE.
Gnfff.
YOU SHOULDNA SAID THAT. WE WOULDA LET YOU GO FREE AND CLEAR. BUT NOW YOU BLIPPED ME. I CAN'T LET THAT GO UNPUNISHED.
THAT WAS REALLY REALLY, STUPID.
TELL ME SOMETHING I DON'T KNOW.
WHAT DO WE DO NOW? I MEAN, WHO'S GONNA HELP US OUT OF THIS ONE?
BATMAN!!!
7

UNGH!
FRAG 'EM!
aurgh!
YOU SHOULDN'T POINT THOSE THINGS. SOMEONE COULD GET...
YAH!
AHHHHH...
...HURT?
IDIOTS. FRAG HIM, NOT ME!
I TOLD THEM TO BE CAREFUL.
HEY, ONLY I MAKE WITH THE JOKES. YOU JUST MAKE WITH THE PAIN. GOT IT?
PAIN. YEAH. I CAN DO THAT.
8

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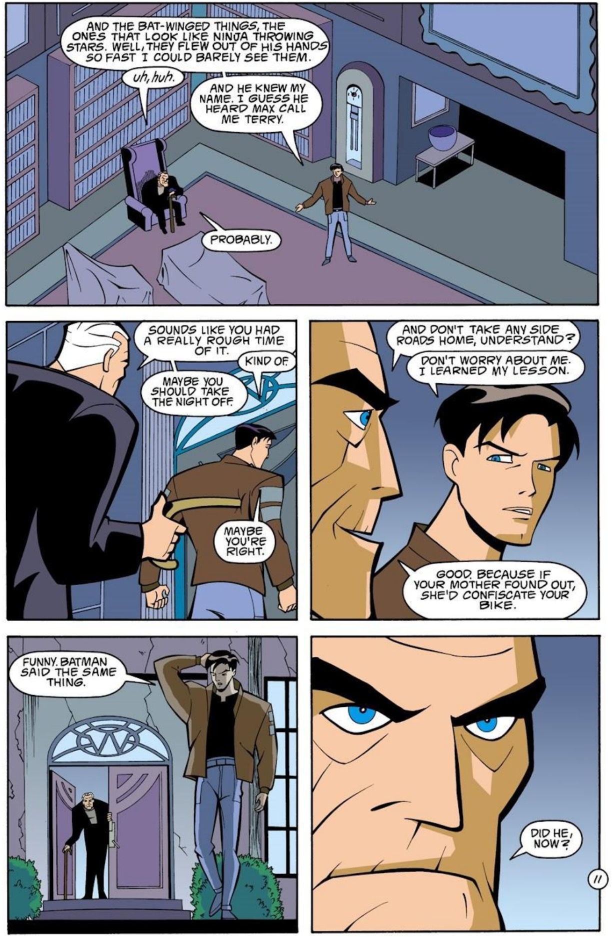

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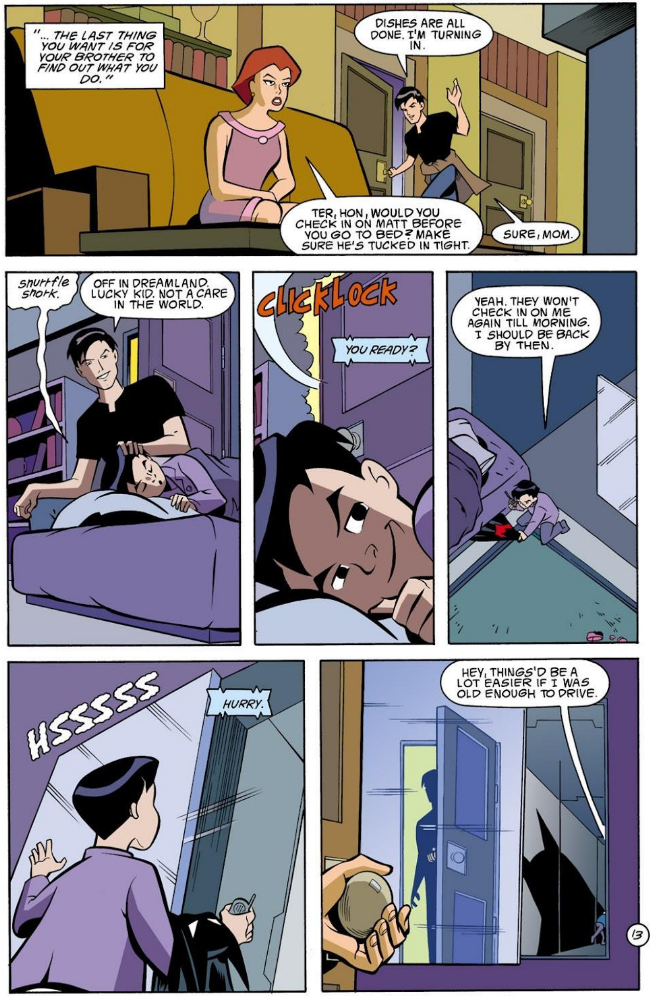
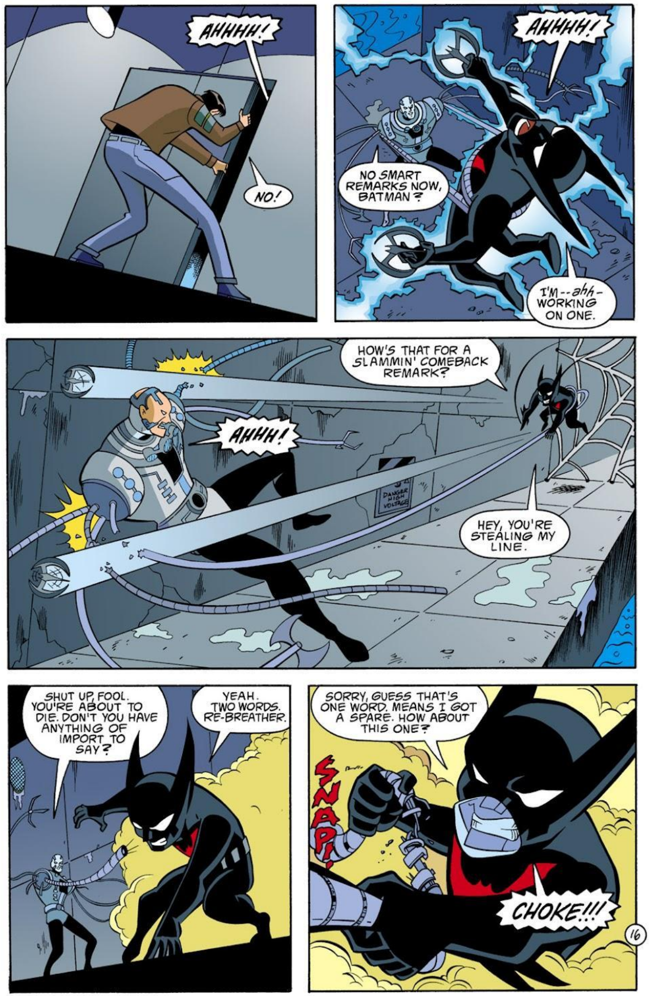

"... THE LAST THING YOU WANT IS FOR YOUR BROTHER TO FIND OUT WHAT YOU DO."
DISHES ARE ALL DONE. I'M TURNING IN.
TER, HON, WOULD YOU CHECK IN ON MATT BEFORE YOU GO TO BED? MAKE SURE HE'S TUCKED IN TIGHT.
SURE, MOM.
snuffle snork.
OFF IN DREAMLAND. LUCKY KID. NOT A CARE IN THE WORLD.
CLICKLOCK
YOU READY?
YEAH. THEY WON'T CHECK IN ON ME AGAIN TILL MORNING. I SHOULD BE BACK BY THEN.
HSSSSS
HURRY.
HEY, THINGS'D BE A LOT EASIER IF I WAS OLD ENOUGH TO DRIVE.

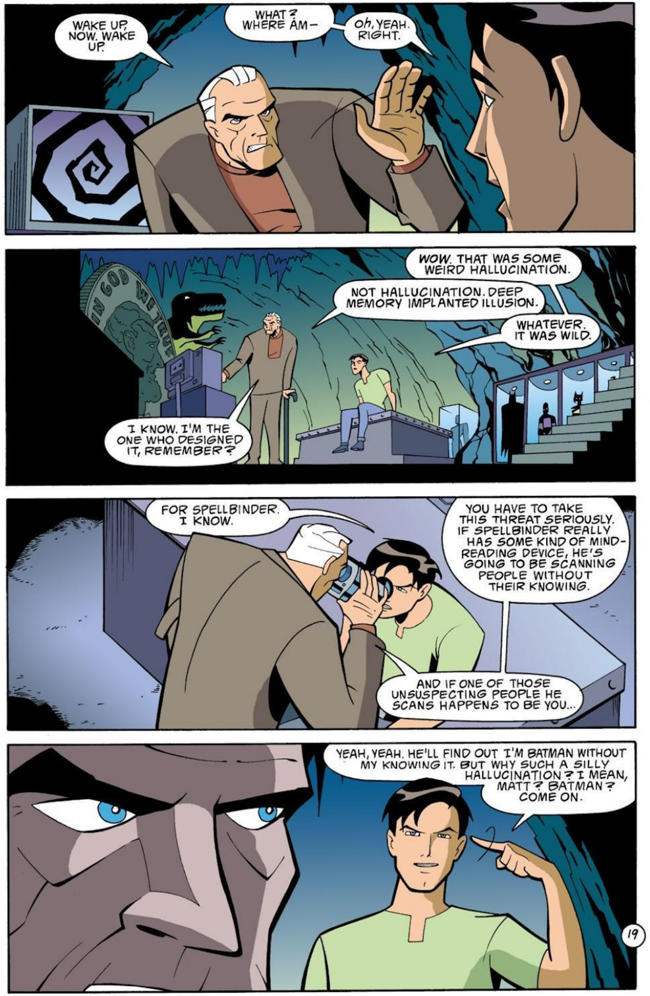
MATT?
SOMETHING VERY WEIRD IS GOING ON HERE.
GRUNT! HNNNG! COME ON, YOU. I SAW YOU MOVE. I'M SURE I DID.
SLAP!
SLAG IT!
huh?
SECRET PASSAGES. LATE NIGHT ESCAPADES. WHAT AM I GETTING MYSELF INTO?

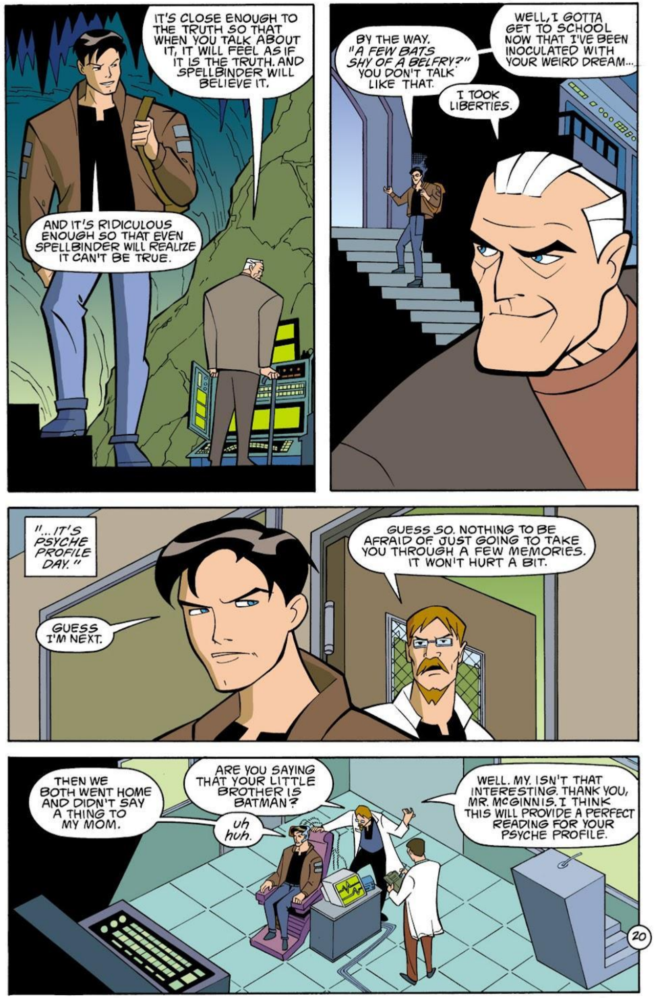
CLICK
GEE, BOSS. COULD YOU HAVE MADE THE SECRET RELEASE ANY HIGHER? I THOUGHT THIS TUNNEL WAS DESIGNED FOR ME.
YOU'LL GROW INTO IT.
WHRRRR
PEE YEW! IT STINKS DOWN HERE.
IT'S A SEWER. IT'S SUPPOSED TO SMELL.
NO. I MEAN REALLY SMELLS. I THINK WE'RE CLOSE TO HIS LAIR.
I FOUND IT. LOOKS LIKE A SPIDER WEB MADE OUT OF CABLES.
ONE OF HIS TRAPS. BE CAREFUL. HE CAN'T BE FAR.
DON'T WORRY, I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO FINDING HIM.
THEN BE HAPPY, BATMAN. YOU HAVE.
WELL, WELL. IF IT ISN'T MY OLD FRIEND, CABLE-GUY.
CABLE "MAN," YOU INSOLENT BIOLOGICAL NONENTITY.
Whoa! HIGH-TECH INSULTS. WELL "NYA, NYA, NYA," BACK 'ATCHA.
"NYA, NYA, NYA"?
HEY, I'M WORKING WITHOUT A SCRIPT HERE.


AHHHH!
NO!
AHHHH!
NO SMART REMARKS NOW, BATMAN?
I'M--ahh--WORKING ON ONE.
HOW'S THAT FOR A SLAMMIN' COMEBACK REMARK?
AHHH!
DANGER HIGH VOLTAGE
HEY, YOU'RE STEALING MY LINE.
SHUT UP, FOOL. YOU'RE ABOUT TO DIE. DON'T YOU HAVE ANYTHING OF IMPORT TO SAY?
YEAH. TWO WORDS. RE-BREATHER.
SORRY, GUESS THAT'S ONE WORD. MEANS I GOT A SPARE. HOW ABOUT THIS ONE?
SNAP!
CHOKE!!!

AFTER I'VE RID MYSELF OF YOU, I WILL INTERFACE MYSELF WITH THE ENTIRE CITY CABLE GRID. ALL THE CITY SERVICES AT MY FINGERTIPS.
IF YOU HAD FINGERTIPS.
RUN! HE'LL KILL YOU WITHOUT A SUIT TO PROTECT YOU.
I'M NOT LEAVING.
WHACK
SLICE
LET HIM GO! IT'S ME YOU WANT. GO FOR ME.
GROAN!
IN DUE TIME.
I SAID, LET HIM GO!
ack CHOKE!
17

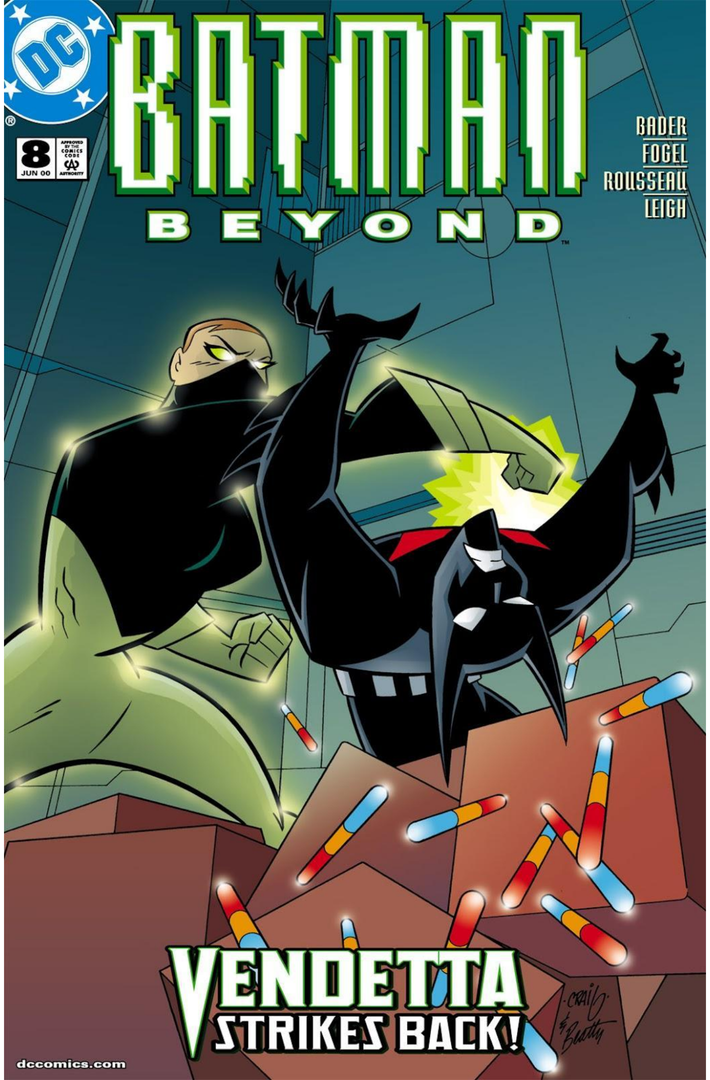
Aurgh!
YOU WANTED POWER? WELL, HERE'S YOUR POWER.
DANGER HIGH VOLTAGE
NO! DON'T! I CAN'T--
ZZZZZZZZZZZTTT!
LIKE WATCHING A BUG ZAPPER.
DANGER HIGH VOLTAGE
TERRY! TERRY, WAKE UP!
MATT! IS IT REALLY YOU? BATMAN? SO SLEEPY.
NO! YOU GOTTA STAY AWAKE, TERRY. WAKE UP! TERRY!
TERRY. WAKE UP. WAKE UP!
18


WAKE UP. NOW. WAKE UP.
WHAT? WHERE AM—
Oh, YEAH. RIGHT.
WOW. THAT WAS SOME WEIRD HALLUCINATION.
NOT HALLUCINATION. DEEP MEMORY IMPLANTED ILLUSION.
WHATEVER. IT WAS WILD.
I KNOW. I'M THE ONE WHO DESIGNED IT, REMEMBER?
FOR SPELLBINDER. I KNOW.
YOU HAVE TO TAKE THIS THREAT SERIOUSLY. IF SPELLBINDER REALLY HAS SOME KIND OF MIND-READING DEVICE, HE'S GOING TO BE SCANNING PEOPLE WITHOUT THEIR KNOWING.
AND IF ONE OF THOSE UNSUSPECTING PEOPLE HE SCANS HAPPENS TO BE YOU...
YEAH, YEAH. HE'LL FIND OUT I'M BATMAN WITHOUT MY KNOWING IT. BUT WHY SUCH A SILLY HALLUCINATION? I MEAN, MATT? BATMAN? COME ON.
19


IT'S CLOSE ENOUGH TO THE TRUTH SO THAT WHEN YOU TALK ABOUT IT, IT WILL FEEL AS IF IT IS THE TRUTH. AND SPELLBINDER WILL BELIEVE IT.
AND IT'S RIDICULOUS ENOUGH SO THAT EVEN SPELLBINDER WILL REALIZE IT CAN'T BE TRUE.
WELL, I GOTTA GET TO SCHOOL NOW THAT I'VE BEEN INOCULATED WITH YOUR WEIRD DREAM...
BY THE WAY. "A FEW BATS SHY OF A BELFRY?" YOU DON'T TALK LIKE THAT.
I TOOK LIBERTIES.
"...IT'S PSYCHE PROFILE DAY."
GUESS I'M NEXT.
GUESS SO. NOTHING TO BE AFRAID OF. JUST GOING TO TAKE YOU THROUGH A FEW MEMORIES. IT WON'T HURT A BIT.
THEN WE BOTH WENT HOME AND DIDN'T SAY A THING TO MY MOM.
ARE YOU SAYING THAT YOUR LITTLE BROTHER IS BATMAN?
uh huh.
WELL. MY. ISN'T THAT INTERESTING. THANK YOU, MR. MCGINNIS. I THINK THIS WILL PROVIDE A PERFECT READING FOR YOUR PSYCHE PROFILE.
20

HE... HE WAS TELLING THE TRUTH.
IMPOSSIBLE. A STORY LIKE THAT.
THAT'S WHAT THE MACHINE SAYS.
MACHINE...
PSYCHE PROFILE TESTING TODAY
CRASH SMASH CRUNCH
MACHINE! THIS MACHINE ISN'T WORTH A CRED.
ALL THIS TIME AND EFFORT WASTED.
SMASH!!
ALL THE DATA WE GATHERED, AT ALL THE SCHOOLS IN GOTHAM. WORTHLESS!
CRUNCH
CLOSE UP SHOP AND LET'S GET OUT OF HERE. BEFORE A TWO-YEAR-OLD SHOWS UP AND CLAIMS TO BE...
...BATMAN!?
WELL, IF IT ISN'T DR. SPINER. IS THAT SHORT FOR SPELLINER? OR SPINDER? OR MAYBE: SPELLBINDER!!
DR. SPINER DR. COATES
• PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTING
• BASELINE PROFILES
• RECOMMENDED BY THE GOTHAM BOARD OF PSYCHIATRY
• SCHOOL RECORDS OUR SPECIALTY
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT, BATMAN. I'M A SIMPLE PSYCHIATRIST. NOTHING---
21

DR. SPINER DR. COATES
LOSE THE ILLUSION.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE--- GACK! ACK! YOU'RE CHOKING ME-GACK!
THAT'S THE IDEA. NOW TURN OFF THE ILLUSION!
WHRRR
I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT. I'M THE ONE WITH THE MIND-BENDING MACHINES, YET YOU SEEM TO BE THE ONE WHO IS ALL-KNOWING. HOW DO YOU ALWAYS FIND ME? HOW DO YOU ALWAYS FIGURE IT OUT?
MUCH BETTER, SPELLBINDER. NOW LET'S JUST GET YOU OUT OF THAT OUTFIT AND BACK TO JAIL WHERE YOU BELONG.
CONNECTIONS. I'VE GOT FRIENDS EVERYWHERE.
BATMAN CAUGHT SPELLBINDER RIGHT THERE AT THE HIGH SCHOOL. ONE OF THE TEACHERS. AND MY DOOFUS BROTHER DIDN'T EVEN SEE IT.
IF I WAS THERE I'DA SEEN. I'DA HELPED HIM. I GOT WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A HERO LIKE BATMAN.
CLOSER TO THE TRUTH THAN YOU THINK, LITTLE BROTHER.
huh?
NEVER MIND.
THE END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VENDETTA

HILARY J. BADER & RICH FOGEL — WRITERS
CRAIG ROUSSEAU — PENCILLER • ROB LEIGH — INKER
TIM HARKINS — LETTERER • LEE LOUGHRIDGE — COLORIST/SEPARATOR
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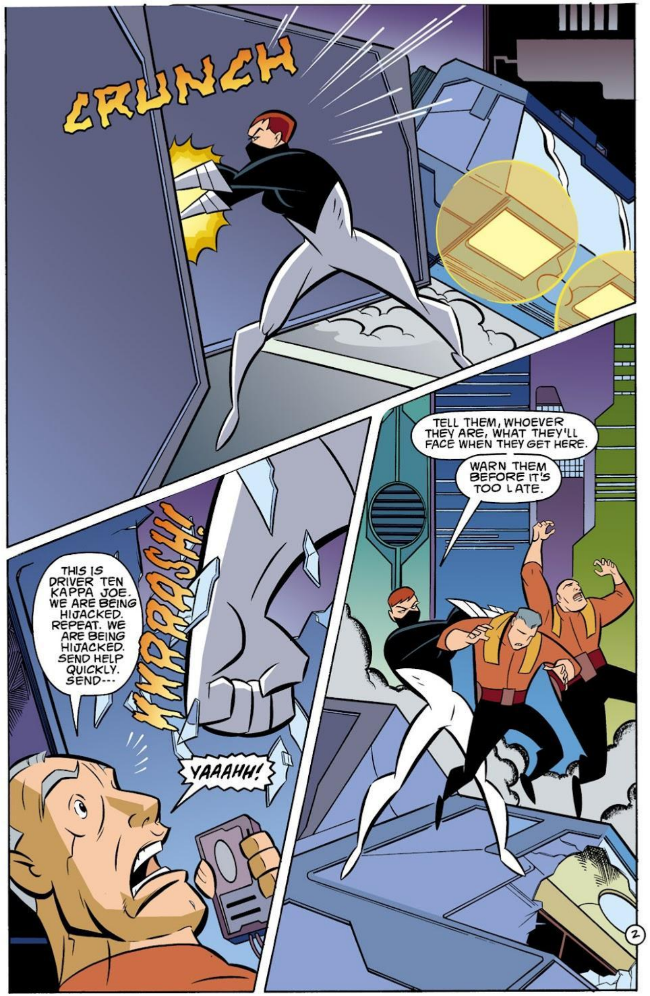
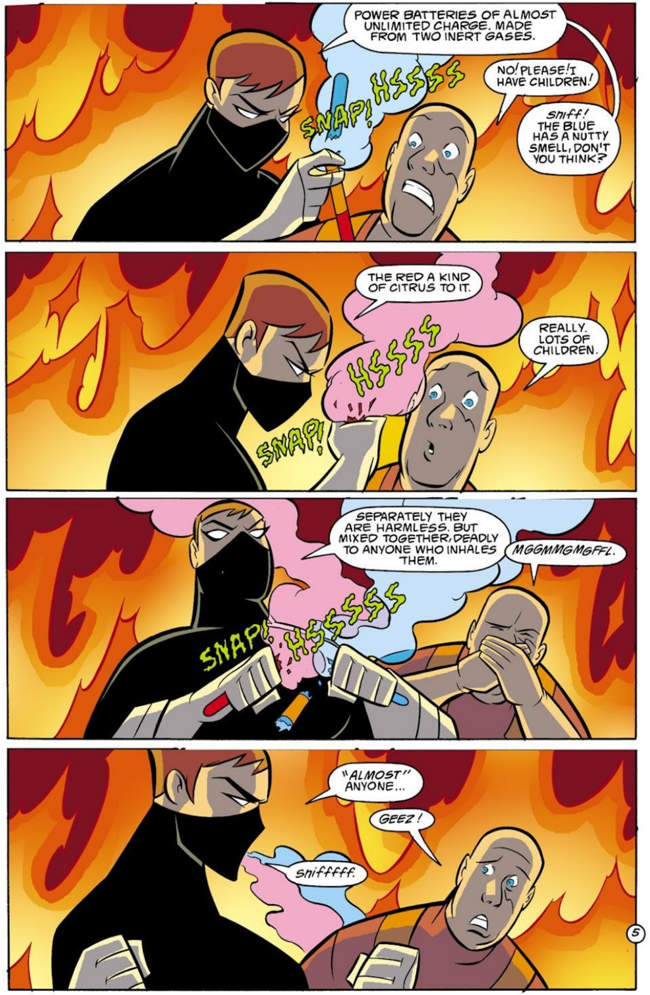
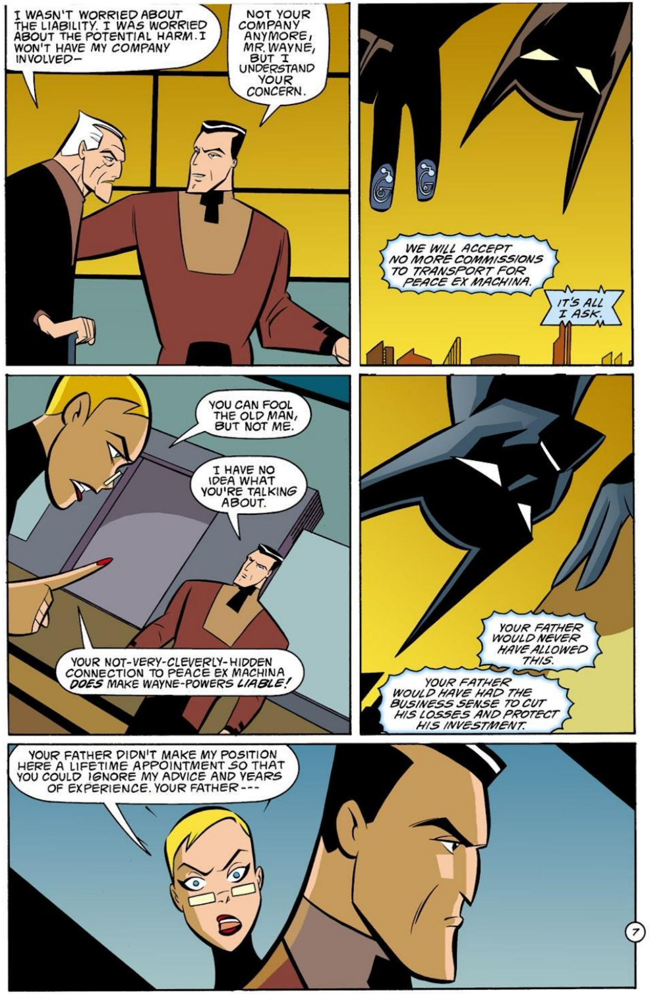


SKKRRUNCH!
I KNEW IT! LIES! HE COVERS UP HIS TRACKS WITH THE SMOKE AND MIRRORS OF BUSINESS SLEIGHT OF HAND.
BUT VENDETTA KNOWS WHERE THE BOTTOM LINE LEADS.
ahh!
WARNING! THIS PRODUCT CAN BE VOLATILE IF HANDLED IMPROPERLY.
OR HADN'T YOU HEARD?
YAAH!
RUN! MOVE IT!
3

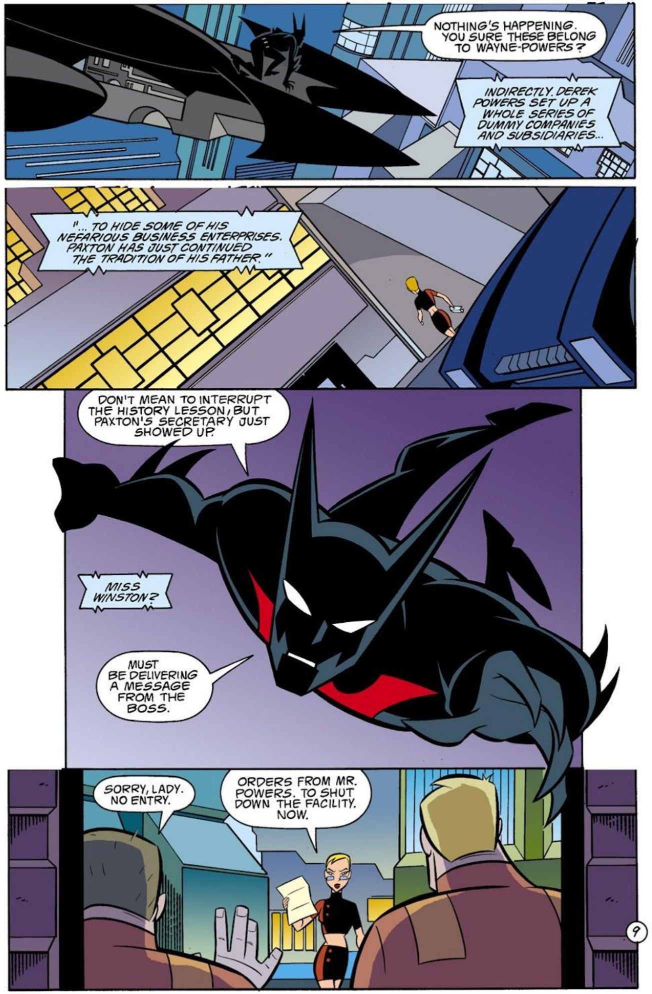
KA-BOOM!
cough! cough! AUGH!
JUST A FEW BROKEN BONES. YOU'LL MEND. AND I'M SURE YOUR EMPLOYER WILL PAY YOU WELL FOR YOUR PAIN. AND YOUR SILENCE.
DID HE TELL YOU WHAT YOU WERE PROTECTING?
DID HE TELL YOU HOW DANGEROUS IT WAS?
4

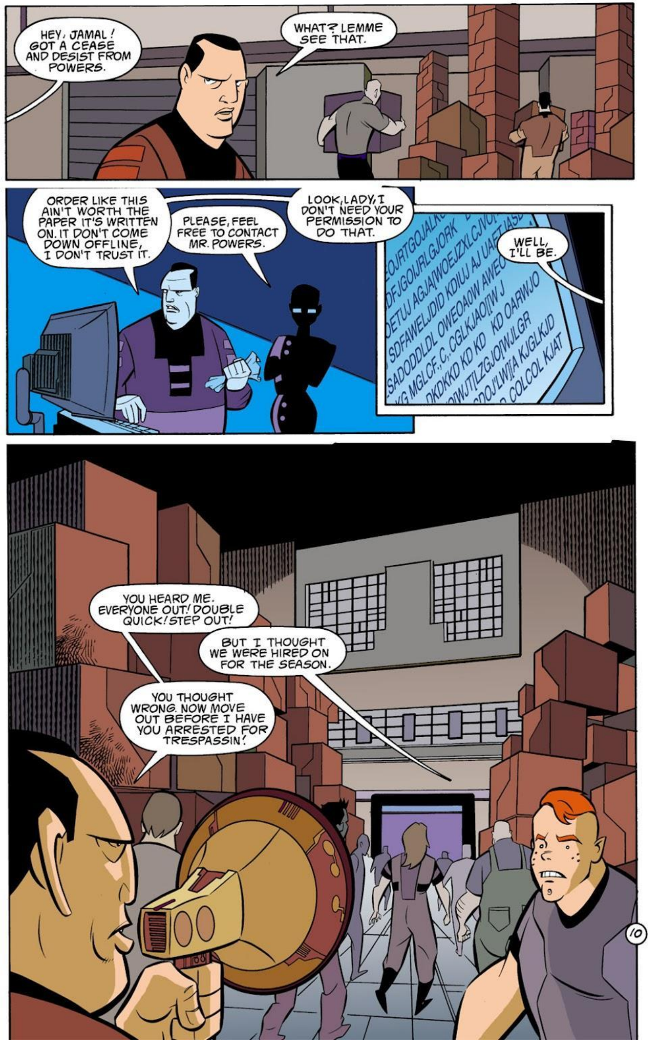

POWER BATTERIES OF ALMOST UNLIMITED CHARGE, MADE FROM TWO INERT GASES.
SNAP!
HSSSS
NO! PLEASE! I HAVE CHILDREN!
sniff! THE BLUE HAS A NUTTY SMELL, DON'T YOU THINK?
THE RED A KIND OF CITRUS TO IT.
HSSSS
SNAP!
REALLY. LOTS OF CHILDREN.
SEPARATELY THEY ARE HARMLESS. BUT MIXED TOGETHER, DEADLY TO ANYONE WHO INHALES THEM.
MGGMMGMGFFL.
SNAP!
HSSSSSS
"ALMOST" ANYONE...
GEEZ!
sniffffff.
5

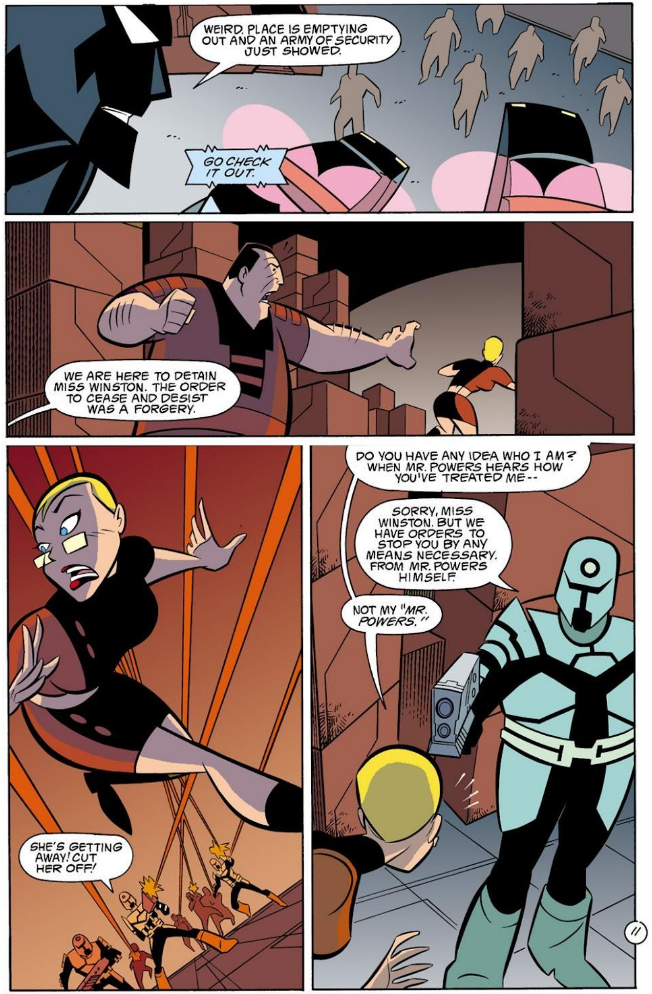
TELL YOUR BOSS WHAT YOU SAW HERE. TELL HIM HE CAN'T HIDE BEHIND A WALL OF SUBSIDIARIES AND HOLDING COMPANIES. NO MATTER WHAT HE DOES...
"...VENDETTA WILL FIND HIM."
THE WISHES OF THE BOARD CONCERNING THESE POWER STICKS WAS CLEAR. WAYNE-POWERS WAS TO HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH THEM.
BECAUSE OF THE POTENTIAL DANGER TO CONSUMERS, PRODUCTION RIGHTS WERE SOLD TO ANOTHER COMPANY. PEACE EX MACHINA, INC.
AND TRANSPORTED BY P. POWERS EXPRESS DELIVERY. A SUBSIDIARY OF WAYNE-POWERS, NO?
OWNED PRIMARILY BY MYSELF. WAYNE-POWERS IS INDEMNIFIED AGAINST THE POTENTIAL LIABILITY.
SMACK!
6


I WASN'T WORRIED ABOUT THE LIABILITY. I WAS WORRIED ABOUT THE POTENTIAL HARM. I WON'T HAVE MY COMPANY INVOLVED—
NOT YOUR COMPANY ANYMORE, MR. WAYNE, BUT I UNDERSTAND YOUR CONCERN.
WE WILL ACCEPT NO MORE COMMISSIONS TO TRANSPORT FOR PEACE EX MACHINA.
IT'S ALL I ASK.
YOU CAN FOOL THE OLD MAN, BUT NOT ME.
I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.
YOUR NOT-VERY-CLEVERLY-HIDDEN CONNECTION TO PEACE EX MACHINA **DOES** MAKE WAYNE-POWERS **LIABLE!**
YOUR FATHER WOULD NEVER HAVE ALLOWED THIS.
YOUR FATHER WOULD HAVE HAD THE BUSINESS SENSE TO CUT HIS LOSSES AND PROTECT HIS INVESTMENT.
YOUR FATHER DIDN'T MAKE MY POSITION HERE A LIFETIME APPOINTMENT SO THAT YOU COULD IGNORE MY ADVICE AND YEARS OF EXPERIENCE. YOUR FATHER---

ENOUGH!
MY FATHER IS DEAD. GONE. AND IF IT WEREN'T FOR **MY FATHER'S SENTIMENTAL** ATTACHMENTS TO HIS LOYAL EMPLOYEES, YOU WOULD BE TOO.
I MEAN "GONE", NOT DEAD, OF COURSE.
OF COURSE.
TERRY, YOU HEAR ANYTHING IMPORTANT?
YEAH. YOU WERE RIGHT. PAXTON'S CONTROLLING THE MANUFACTURE OF THE DEVICES AND HE'S STILL GOT WAYNE-POWERS TIED INTO THE WHOLE DEAL.
AND NOT JUST THE DELIVERY SYSTEM.
I THINK A GOOD START WOULD BE TO LOCATE ONE OF THE PACKAGING PLANTS. AND I'VE GOT A GOOD IDEA WHERE THAT MIGHT BE.


NOTHING'S HAPPENING. YOU SURE THESE BELONG TO WAYNE-POWERS?
INDIRECTLY. DEREK POWERS SET UP A WHOLE SERIES OF DUMMY COMPANIES AND SUBSIDIARIES...
"...TO HIDE SOME OF HIS NEFARIOUS BUSINESS ENTERPRISES. PAXTON HAS JUST CONTINUED THE TRADITION OF HIS FATHER."
DON'T MEAN TO INTERRUPT THE HISTORY LESSON, BUT PAXTON'S SECRETARY JUST SHOWED UP.
MISS WINSTON?
MUST BE DELIVERING A MESSAGE FROM THE BOSS.
SORRY, LADY. NO ENTRY.
ORDERS FROM MR. POWERS. TO SHUT DOWN THE FACILITY. NOW.
9

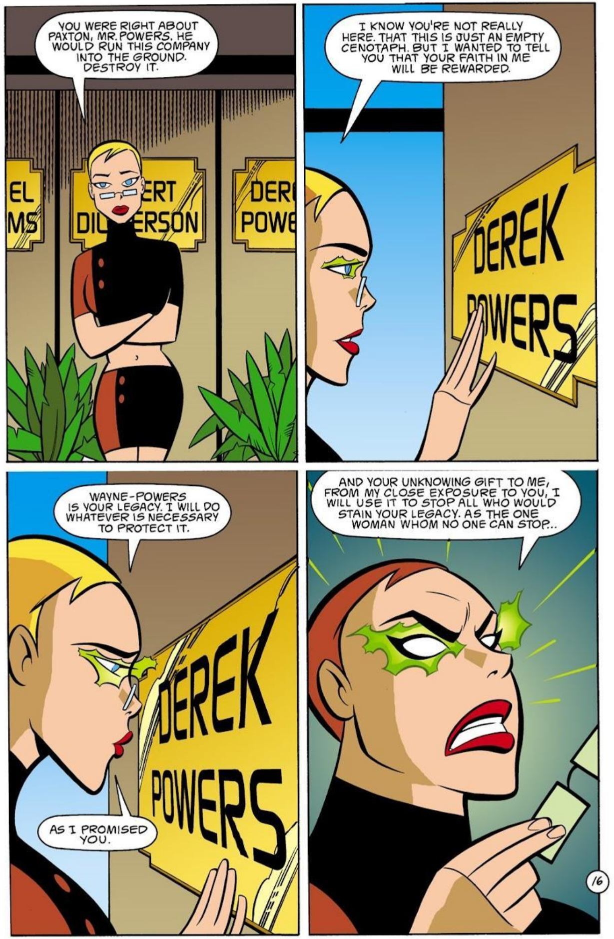

HEY, JAMAL! GOT A CEASE AND DESIST FROM POWERS.
WHAT? LEMME SEE THAT.
ORDER LIKE THIS AIN'T WORTH THE PAPER IT'S WRITTEN ON. IT DON'T COME DOWN OFFLINE, I DON'T TRUST IT.
PLEASE, FEEL FREE TO CONTACT MR. POWERS.
LOOK, LADY, I DON'T NEED YOUR PERMISSION TO DO THAT.
WELL, I'LL BE.
YOU HEARD ME. EVERYONE OUT! DOUBLE QUICK! STEP OUT!
BUT I THOUGHT WE WERE HIRED ON FOR THE SEASON.
YOU THOUGHT WRONG. NOW MOVE OUT BEFORE I HAVE YOU ARRESTED FOR TRESPASSIN'!
10


WEIRD. PLACE IS EMPTYING OUT AND AN ARMY OF SECURITY JUST SHOWED.
GO CHECK IT OUT.
WE ARE HERE TO DETAIN MISS WINSTON. THE ORDER TO CEASE AND DESIST WAS A FORGERY.
SHE'S GETTING AWAY! CUT HER OFF!
DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHO I AM? WHEN MR. POWERS HEARS HOW YOU'VE TREATED ME--
SORRY, MISS WINSTON. BUT WE HAVE ORDERS TO STOP YOU BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY. FROM MR. POWERS HIMSELF.
NOT MY "MR. POWERS."

PICK ON SOMEONE YOUR OWN SIZE! IF YOU CAN FIND SOMEONE YOUR OWN SIZE.
OOF!
IF SHE COMES BACK THIS WAY, SMOKE HER!
YOU WANT SMOKE? I CAN OBLIGE.
UNGH! OOF. YAHH!
WHAT THE HECK WAS THAT--
"THAT" WAS YOUR PAYMENT FOR WORKING FOR THE LIKES OF PAXTON POWERS. NOW TAKE THE BONUS AND GET OUT!
OOF! SHOOT. SHOOT!
AHHH!

GRRRR!
YAAAAHH!
ENOUGH! YOU'LL BLOW THE WHOLE PLACE.
THAT'S WHAT I'M TRYING TO DO. DESTROY IT ALL.
I AM VENDETTA! I HAVE A MISSION. A REASON.
WELL, I DON'T CARE. THIS "VENDETTA" STOPS NOW.
IF YOU'RE NOT PART OF THE SOLUTION, BATMAN...
I KNOW. "I'M PART OF THE PROBLEM." ACK!
NO. I MAKE YOU PART OF THE SOLUTION.
13

WE BOTH WANT THE SAME THING.
SHOOSH
I DON'T THINK SO.
I WANT THE TOTAL DESTRUCTION OF THE ONES RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS. TOTAL!!
14



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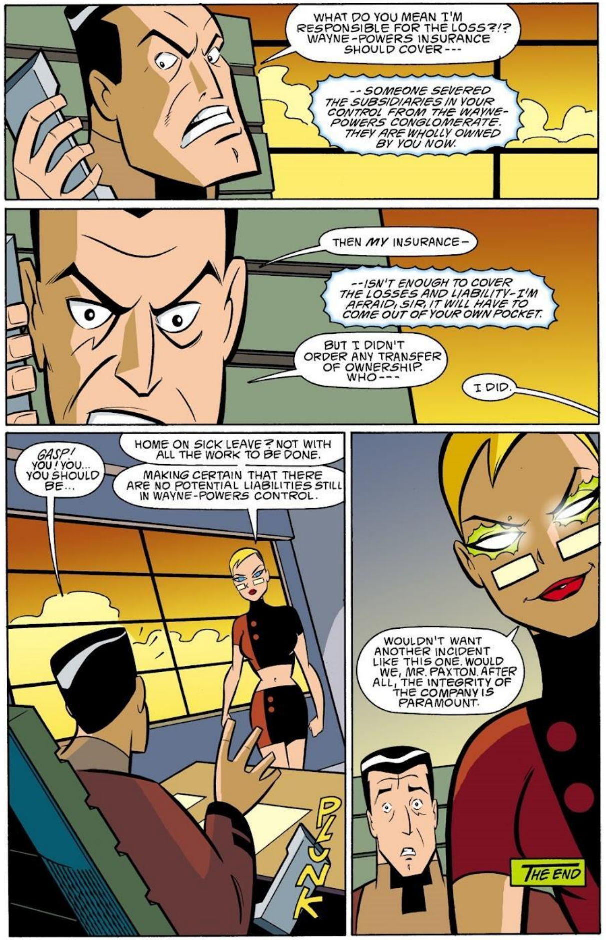
"AS VENDETTA."
I'M GLAD YOU UNDERSTAND WHY I TOOK THAT EXTREME ACTION, MR. POWERS. AND THAT YOU'VE FINALLY DECIDED TO RETHINK YOUR POSITION.
WELL, IF MY FATHER HAD FAITH IN YOU, THERE MUST BE A REASON.
WHAT IS THIS? A JOKE? YOU SAID YOU WERE DRIVING OUT TO THE MANUFACTURING PLANT.
AND I AM. BUT FIRST I'M HAVING A SMALL BLEMISH REMOVED. THAT WOULD BE YOU.
TAKE CARE OF HER, DOM.
NO! PLEASE DON'T! I--
BZAP! BZAP! BZAP! BZAP!
SHE WON'T BE A PROBLEM ANY-MORE, SIR.
BZZZZZZZZZZ
"NO PROBLEM AT ALL."
17

SO, YOU FIGURE OUT WHY THIS WOMAN IS TRYING TO DESTROY WAYNE-POWERS?
SHE'S NOT.
BUT ALL THE ATTACKS???
--WERE ON VERY SPECIFIC TARGETS. SHE'S NOT TRYING TO BRING DOWN WAYNE-POWERS. SHE'S TRYING TO SAVE IT BY BRINGING DOWN THE HEAD...
"...PAXTON POWERS."
DOING A LITTLE MIDNIGHT SKULKING, POWERS?
I'M DOING NOTHING ILLEGAL. SO WHY DON'T YOU JUST GO BOTHER SOME REAL CRIMINAL, BATMAN.
I'D LOVE TO. BUT BELIEVE IT OR NOT, I'M HERE TO PROTECT YOU.
AGAINST WHOM?
AGAINST ME!
UNGH!
18

KRASH
OOF! OKAY, I GET IT, YOU HATE PAXTON. WHO DOESN'T?
IF I HAVE TO GET THROUGH YOU TO ACCOMPLISH MY GOAL, I WILL.
BUT YOU CAN'T JUST DESTROY HIM AND EVERYTHING HE'S TOUCHED.
WATCH ME.
URGH!
SMACK
PAXTON WILL GET HIS. I PROMISE.
PROMISE ALL YOU WANT. I'M MAKING SURE.
19

SMMASH!
BETTER GET OUT, BATMAN. THERE'S ENOUGH HERE TO FILL THE WHOLE FACTORY.
SNAP! SNAP!
YOU MAY BE PROTECTED FROM THE GAS, BUT NOT THE EXPLOSION. AND THIS ONE WILL TAKE OUT THE ENTIRE BLOCK.
Whoa!
SNAP!
HOW GENTLEMANLY. AND HOW FOOLISH. SORRY, BUT I'M DANCING THIS ONE ALONE.
OOF!
KRAAASH
UNGH!
TERRY. ARE YOU OKAY?
I HAVE TO GET HER OUT.
NO. IT'S TOO LATE.
20



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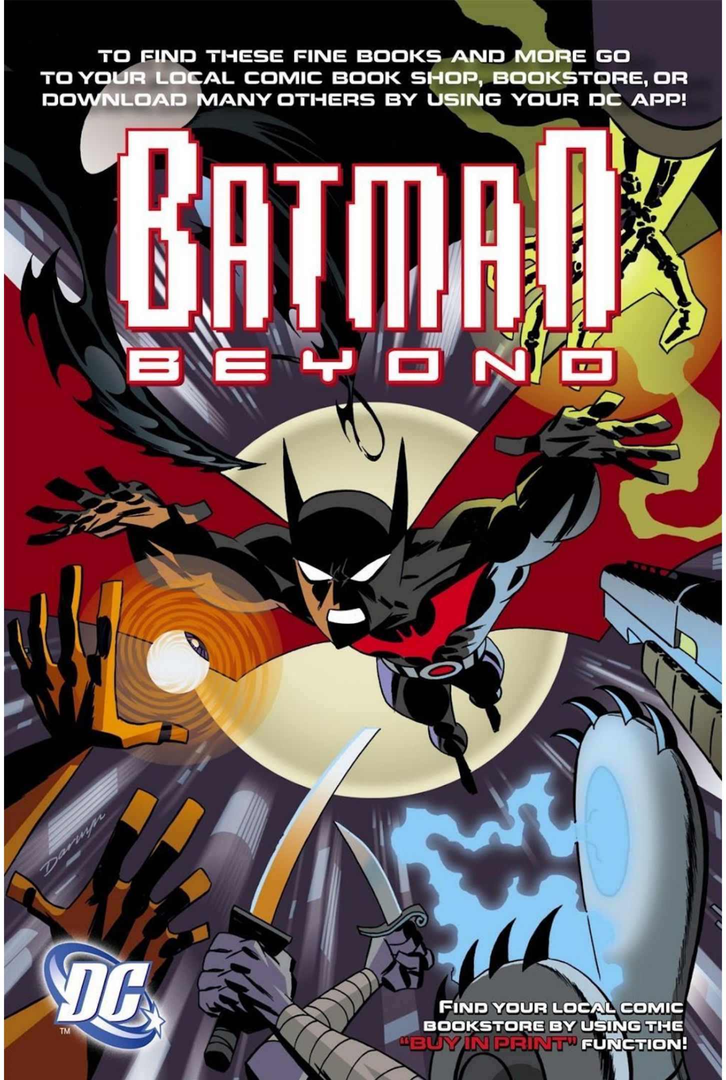
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DC
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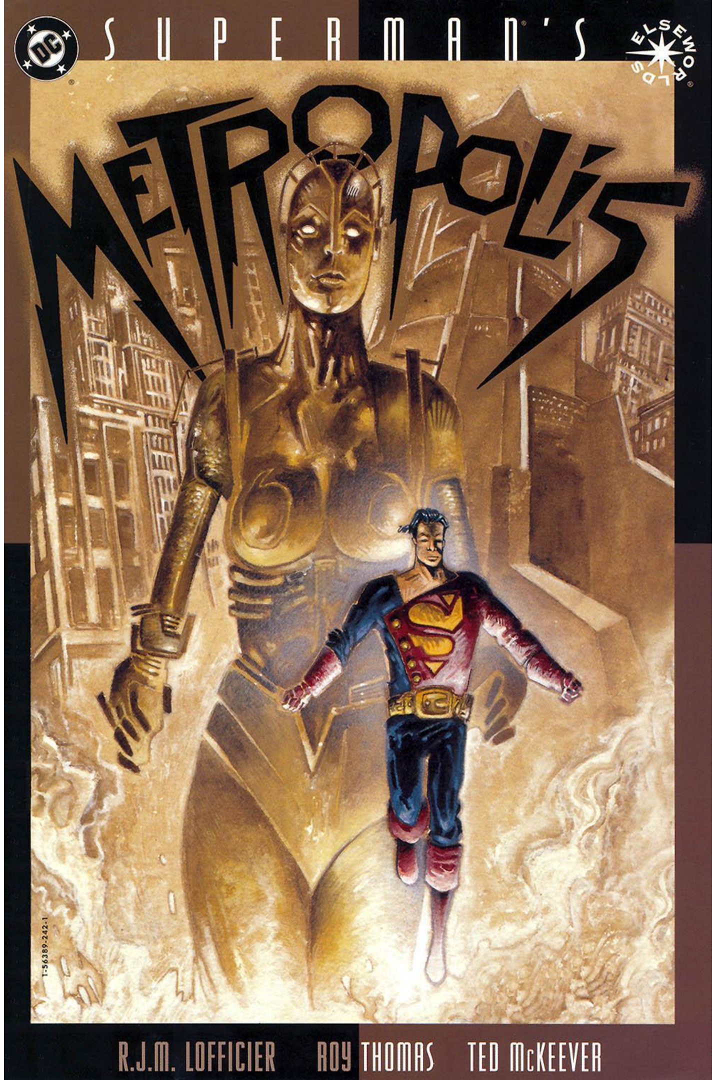
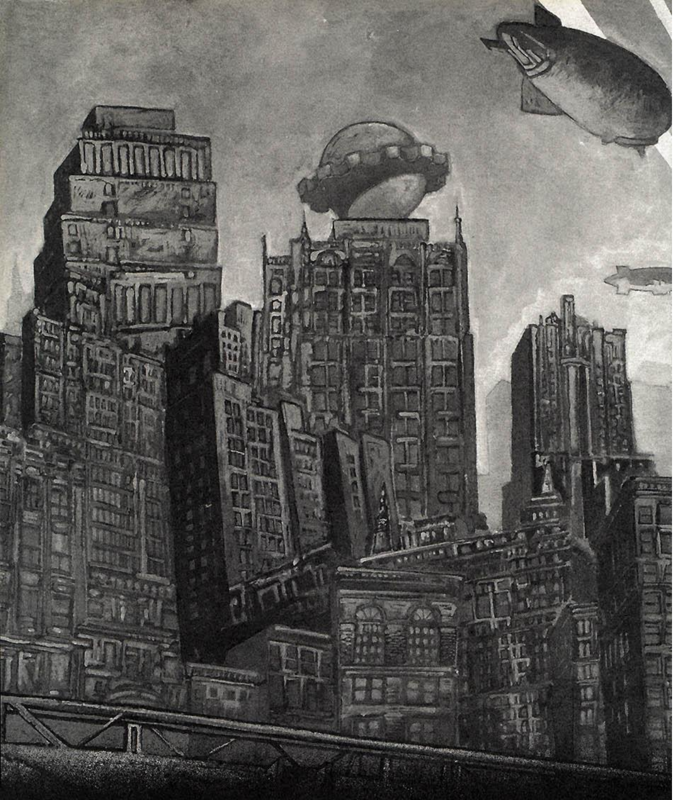

DC
SUPERMAN'S
ELSEWORLDS
METROPOLIS
R.J.M. LOFFICIER
ROY THOMAS
TED McKEEVER



Cinematography
TED McKEEVER

Screenplay
R.J.M. LOFFICIER AND ROY THOMAS

Titles
BILL OAKLEY

Inspired by METROPOLIS, the classic film by FRITZ LANG and the novel by THEA VON HARBOU
SUPERMAN created by JERRY SIEGEL & JOE SHUSTER

SUPERMAN'S METROPOLIS
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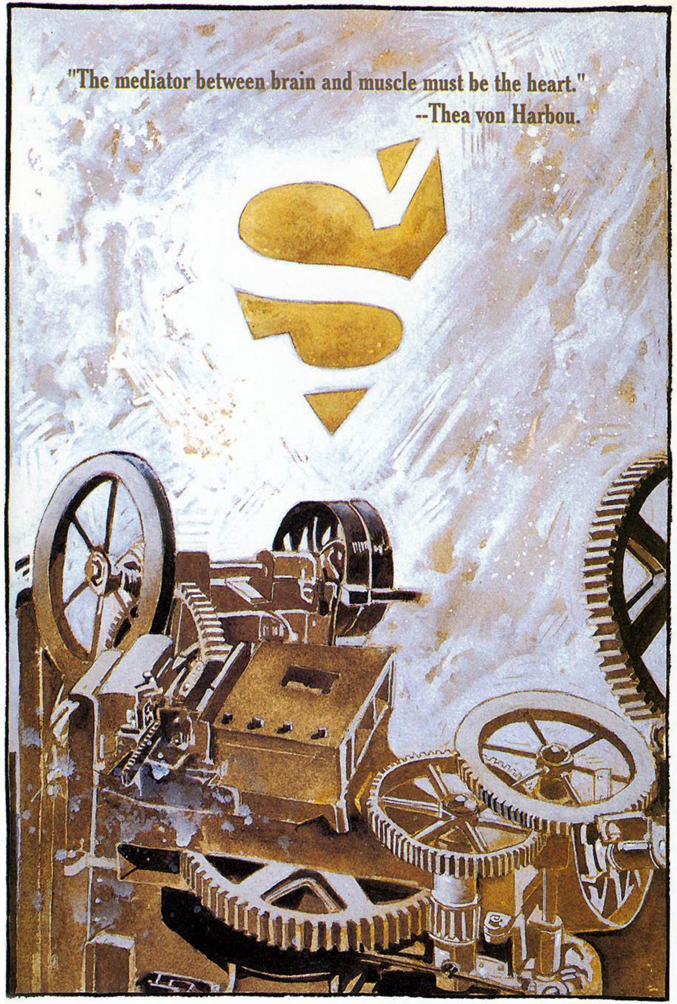
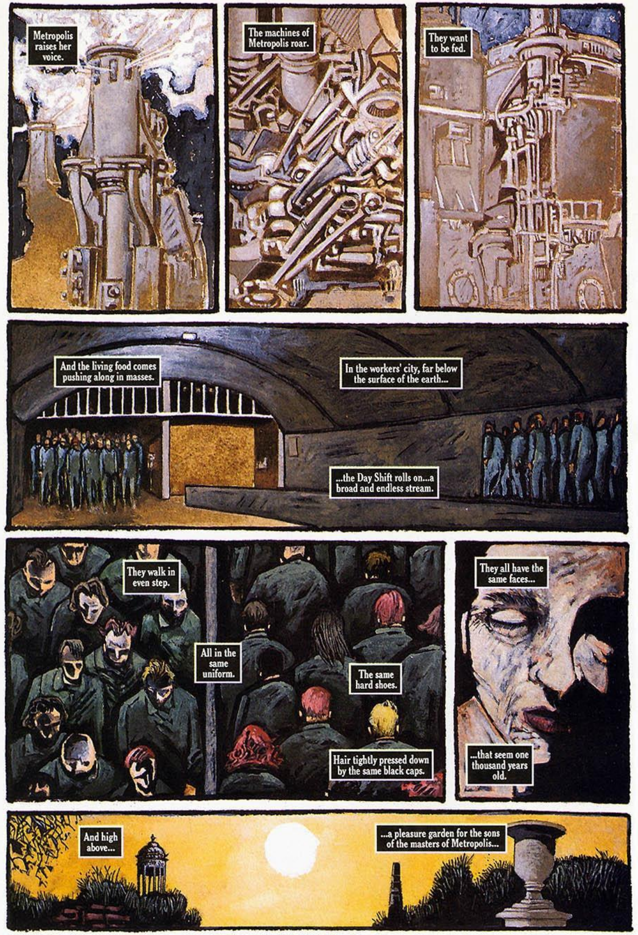


When the sun sinks at the back of Metropolis, the houses turn to mountains and the streets to valleys.
A stream of light, which seems to crackle with coldness, breaks forth from all windows...from the roofs... and from the heart of town.
The searchlights, in all the colors of the rainbow, begin to play around the new Tower of Babel.
And then...the Siren sounds.
Without being shrill, it penetrates all walls.



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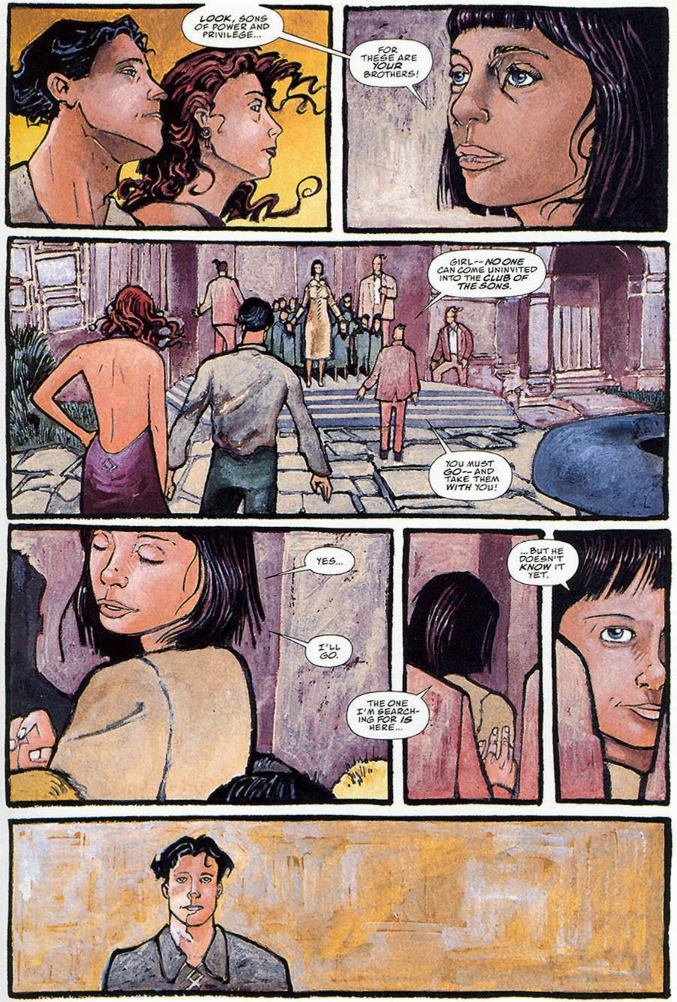
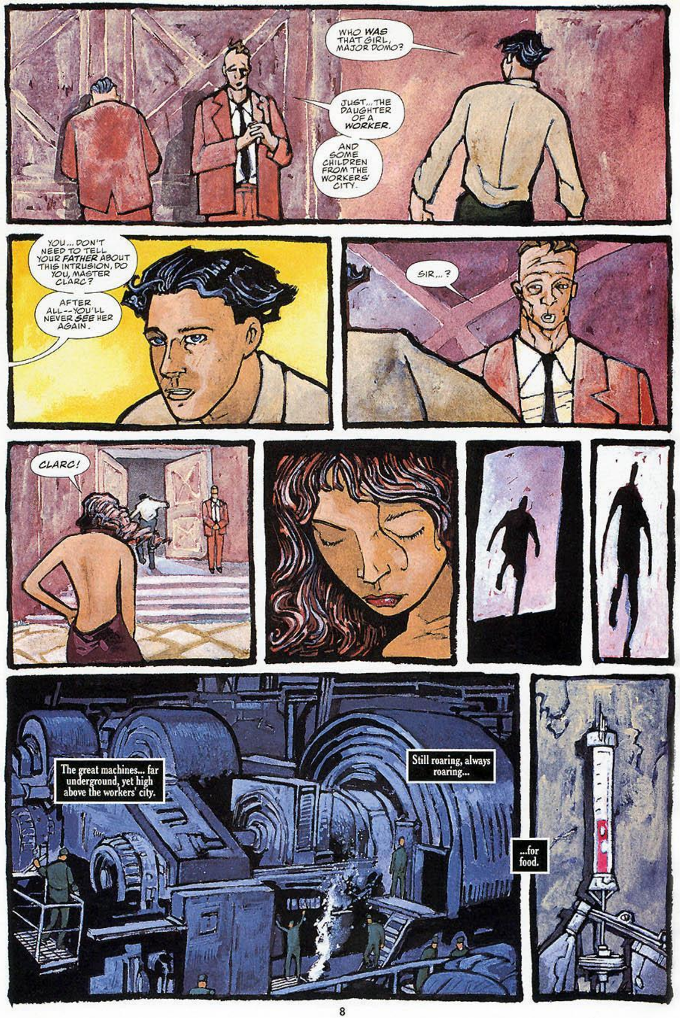
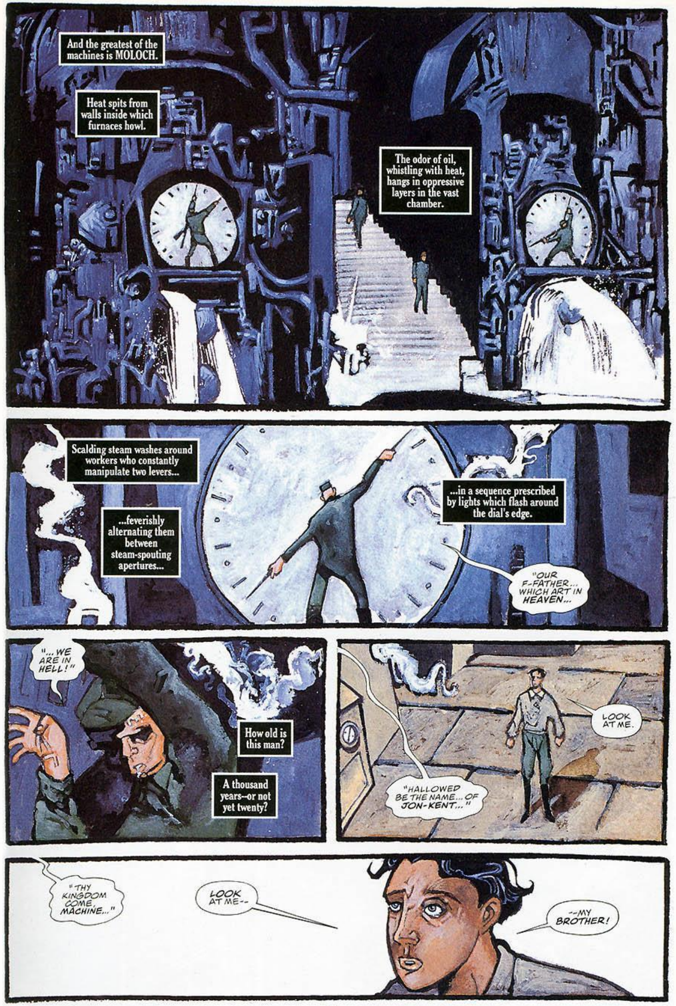
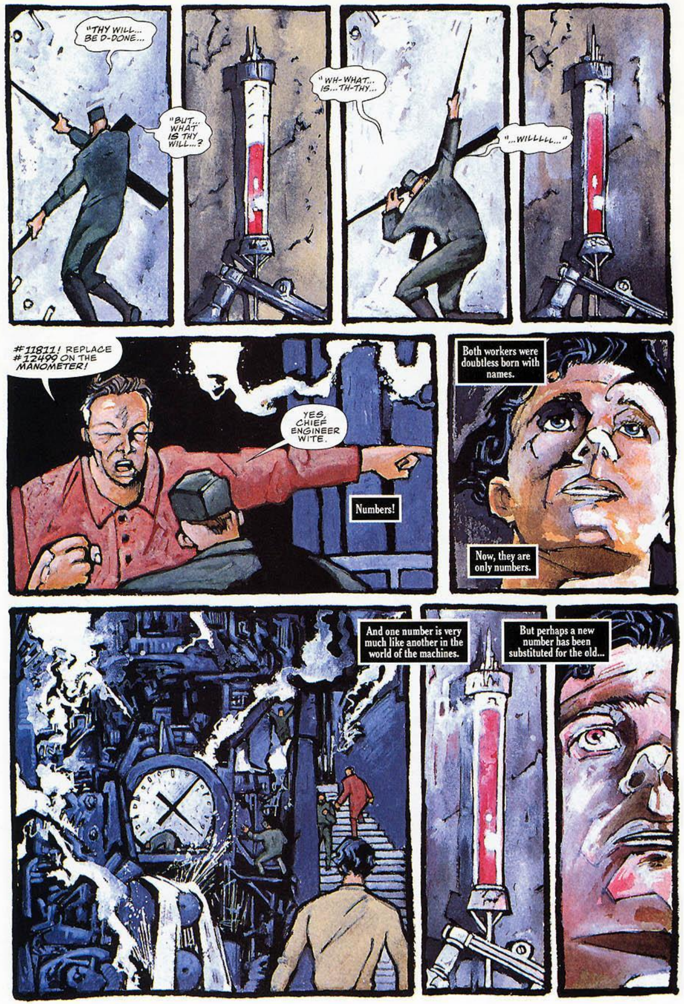
LOOK...
THESE ARE YOUR BROTHERS!
I'VE BROUGHT THEM TO THE SURFACE...
...AS I CAME SEEKING...
...THE ONE WHO WILL SAVE THEM.
IS HE HERE?
DOES HE SEE?


LOOK, SONS OF POWER AND PRIVILEGE...
FOR THESE ARE YOUR BROTHERS!
GIRL--NO ONE CAN COME UNINVITED INTO THE CLUB OF THE SONS.
YOU MUST GO--AND TAKE THEM WITH YOU!
YES...
I'LL GO.
THE ONE I'M SEARCH-ING FOR IS HERE...
...BUT HE DOESN'T KNOW IT YET.


WHO WAS THAT GIRL, MAJOR DOMO?
JUST... THE DAUGHTER OF A WORKER.
AND SOME CHILDREN FROM THE WORKERS' CITY.
YOU... DON'T NEED TO TELL YOUR FATHER ABOUT THIS INTRUSION, DO YOU, MASTER CLARC?
AFTER ALL--YOU'LL NEVER SEE HER AGAIN.
SIR...?
CLARC!
The great machines... far underground, yet high above the workers' city.
Still roaring, always roaring...
...for food.

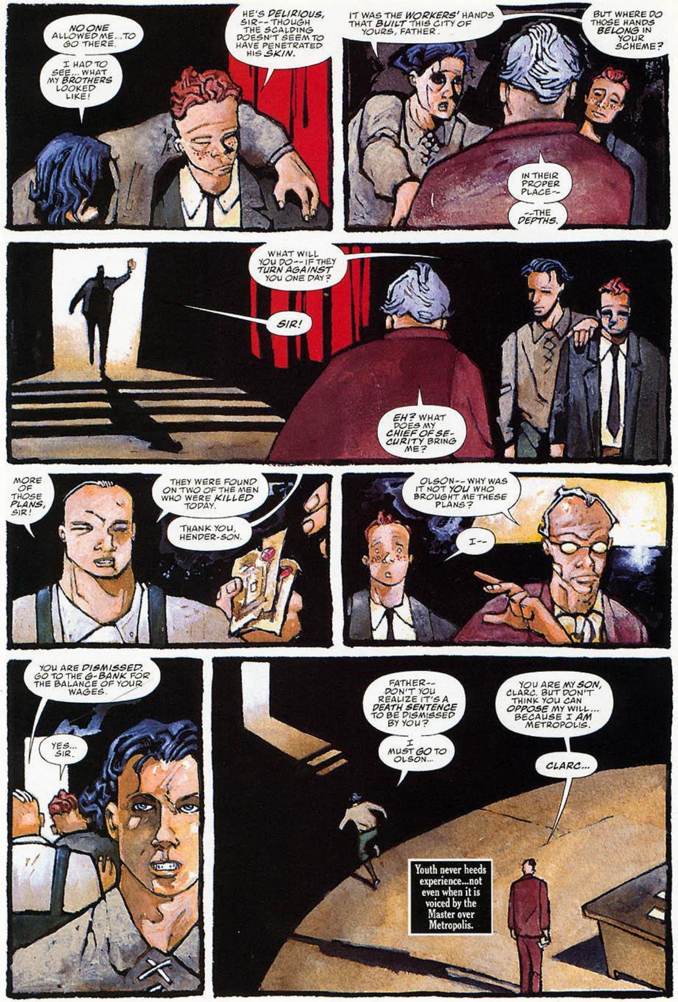

And the greatest of the machines is MOLOCH.
Heat spits from walls inside which furnaces howl.
The odor of oil, whistling with heat, hangs in oppressive layers in the vast chamber.
Scalding steam washes around workers who constantly manipulate two levers...
...feverishly alternating them between steam-spouting apertures...
...in a sequence prescribed by lights which flash around the dial's edge.
"OUR F-FATHER... WHICH ART IN HEAVEN...
"...WE ARE IN HELL!"
How old is this man?
A thousand years--or not yet twenty?
LOOK AT ME.
"HALLOWED BE THE NAME... OF JON-KENT..."
"THY KINGDOM COME, MACHINE..."
LOOK AT ME--
--MY BROTHER!

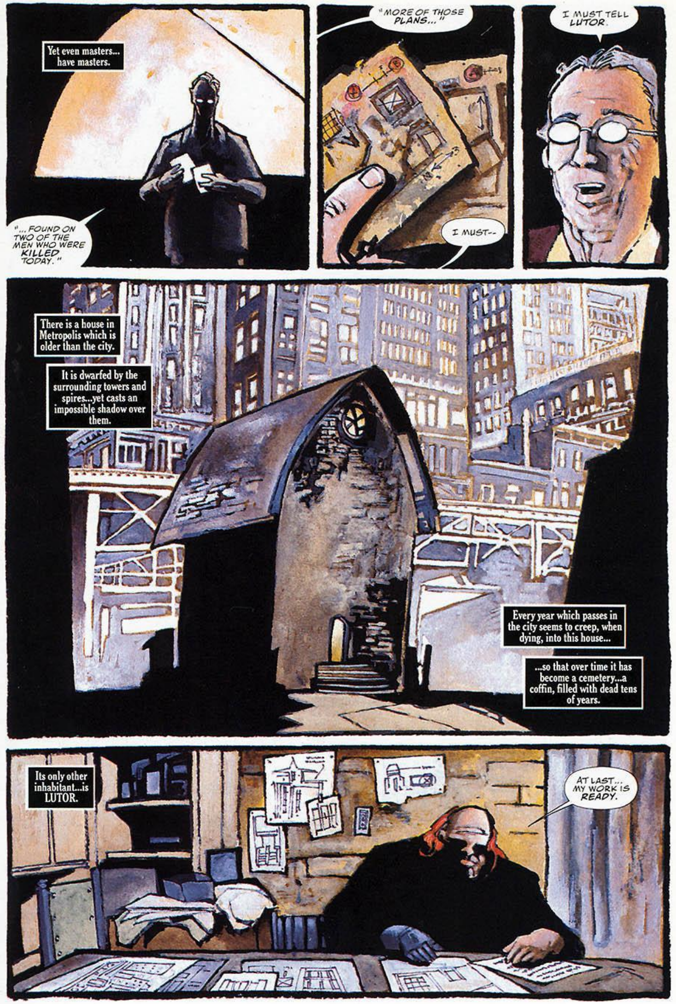

"THY WILL... BE D-DONE...
"BUT... WHAT IS THY WILL...?
"WH-WHAT... IS... TH-THY...
"...WILLLLL..."
#11811! REPLACE #12499 ON THE MANOMETER!
YES, CHIEF ENGINEER WITE.
Numbers!
Both workers were doubtless born with names.
Now, they are only numbers.
And one number is very much like another in the world of the machines.
But perhaps a new number has been substituted for the old...

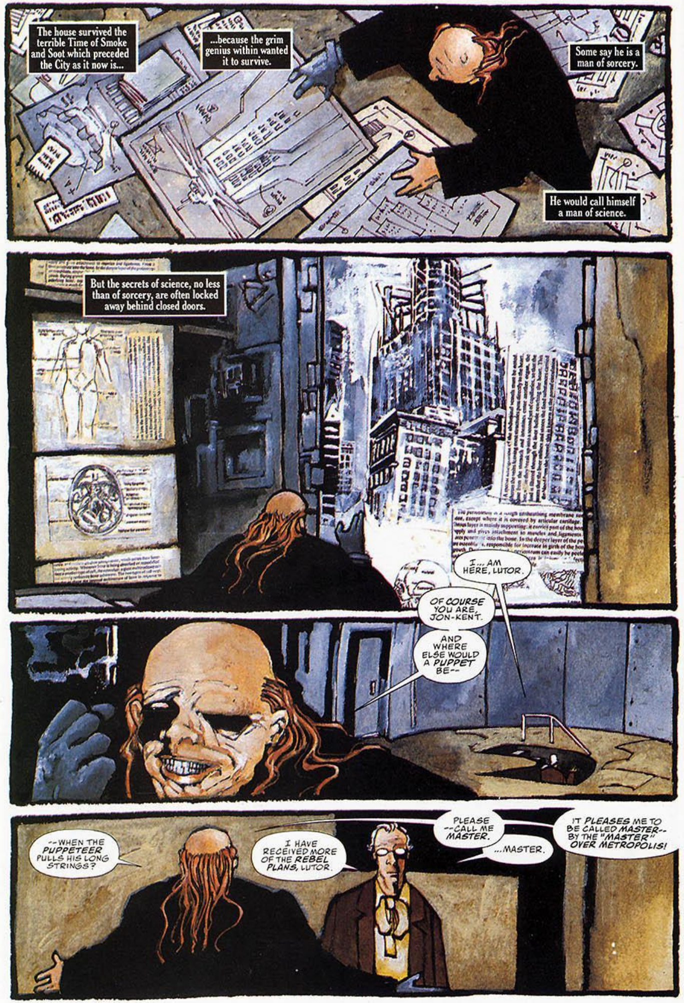
...too late!
"OUR... FATHER...
"...WHICH ...ART IN HEAVEN...
"...WE ARE IN HELL!

...HELLLLLLL...
The corpses of workers and chief engineer alike are carried up the steam-scorched stairs...
...to be devoured by the yawning maw of MOLOCH.
MY FATHER...
"...WHICH ART IN HEAVEN..."
In the brain-pan of the building known to the world as the New Tower of Babel--

--dwells the Master over Metropolis.
...PRODUCTION FIGURES REMAIN SLUGGISH... THEY MUST BE INCREASED IMMEDIATELY... NO EXCUSES WILL BE ACCEPTED.
SIGN IT: "JON-KENT."
FATHER!
I MUST SPEAK WITH YOU!
IN A MOMENT, MY SON. I AM DICTATING.
NOW, RELATING TO THE RECENT INCIDENTS OF THE FURNACES OVERHEATING...
FATHER--
--TH-THAT'S WHAT I MUST T-TALK TO YOU ABOUT...
SIR--HE'S FALLING!
HE'S HURT!
I THINK NOT.
NO-- NOT HURT-- THOUGH I SHOULD HAVE BEEN!
THE STEAM IN THE MACHINE-ROOMS--THERE WAS AN ACCIDENT--SO MANY WORKERS WERE KILLED...
SUCH ACCIDENTS ARE UNAVOIDABLE!
BUT--OLSON! WHY WAS MY SON ALLOWED TO GO INTO THE MACHINE-ROOMS?
YOU KNOW MY STANDING ORDERS...


NO ONE ALLOWED ME... TO GO THERE.
I HAD TO SEE... WHAT MY BROTHERS LOOKED LIKE!
HE'S DELIRIOUS, SIR-- THOUGH THE SCALDING DOESN'T SEEM TO HAVE PENETRATED HIS SKIN.
IT WAS THE WORKERS' HANDS THAT BUILT THIS CITY OF YOURS, FATHER.
BUT WHERE DO THOSE HANDS BELONG IN YOUR SCHEME?
IN THEIR PROPER PLACE--
--THE DEPTHS.
WHAT WILL YOU DO-- IF THEY TURN AGAINST YOU ONE DAY?
SIR!
EH? WHAT DOES MY CHIEF OF SECURITY BRING ME?
MORE OF THOSE PLANS, SIR!
THEY WERE FOUND ON TWO OF THE MEN WHO WERE KILLED TODAY.
THANK YOU, HENDER-SON.
OLSON-- WHY WAS IT NOT YOU WHO BROUGHT ME THESE PLANS?
I--
YOU ARE DISMISSED. GO TO THE G-BANK FOR THE BALANCE OF YOUR WAGES.
YES... SIR.
FATHER-- DON'T YOU REALIZE IT'S A DEATH SENTENCE TO BE DISMISSED BY YOU?
I MUST GO TO OLSON...
YOU ARE MY SON, CLARC. BUT DON'T THINK YOU CAN OPPOSE MY WILL... BECAUSE I AM METROPOLIS.
CLARC...
Youth never heeds experience...not even when it is voiced by the Master over Metropolis.


Yet even masters... have masters.
"...FOUND ON TWO OF THE MEN WHO WERE KILLED TODAY."
"MORE OF THOSE PLANS..."
I MUST--
I MUST TELL LUTOR.
There is a house in Metropolis which is older than the city.
It is dwarfed by the surrounding towers and spires...yet casts an impossible shadow over them.
Every year which passes in the city seems to creep, when dying, into this house...
...so that over time it has become a cemetery...a coffin, filled with dead tens of years.
Its only other inhabitant...is LUTOR.
AT LAST... MY WORK IS READY.



The house survived the terrible Time of Smoke and Soot which preceded the City as it now is...
...because the grim genius within wanted it to survive.
Some say he is a man of sorcery.
He would call himself a man of science.
But the secrets of science, no less than of sorcery, are often locked away behind closed doors.
I... AM HERE, LUTOR.
OF COURSE YOU ARE, JON-KENT.
AND WHERE ELSE WOULD A PUPPET BE--
--WHEN THE PUPPETEER PULLS HIS LONG STRINGS?
I HAVE RECEIVED MORE OF THE REBEL PLANS, LUTOR.
PLEASE --CALL ME MASTER.
...MASTER.
IT PLEASES ME TO BE CALLED MASTER-- BY THE "MASTER" OVER METROPOLIS!

HOW DIFFERENT IT WAS IN THE OLD TIME, WASN'T IT, JON-KENT?
I KEEP THE IMAGES OF IT HERE WITH ME, PLAYING UPON MY WALLS LIKE AN OLD RECORDING.
METROPOLIS WAS A NEW CITY THEN--FILLED WITH UTOPIAN PROMISE--
--WITH YOU, ITS CHIEF ARCHITECT-- AND I, ITS PRIME ENGINEER--THE STRONGEST OF ALLIES, THE BEST OF FRIENDS.
BUT THEN CAME-- MARTA.
Ah, YES --DEAR MARTA.
SHE WAS THE LIGHT WHICH SHONE THROUGH THE TIME OF SMOKE AND SOOT--
--AND FOR A TIME HER SUN SHONE EQUALLY ON BOTH OF US.
BUT THEN CAME THE DAY WHEN SHE HAD TO CHOOSE--
--AND SHE CHOSE YOU--"OLD FRIEND."
THAT WAS WHEN I WITHDREW TO MY CROOKED HOUSE IN THE MIDDLE OF A VERY LINEAR CITY--
"--AND BEGAN PLOTTING MY REVENGE.
"IN TIME, MARTA DIED.
"HOW COULD IT BE OTHERWISE?
"THE DAY SHE CHOSE YOU OVER ME, SHE HAD SIGNED HER DEATH SENTENCE--
"--EVEN THOUGH YOU HAD A SON BY THE TIME I CARRIED IT OUT.
"NOT THAT I LOVED HER ANY THE LESS WHEN I KILLED HER.
"BUT THAT WAS ONLY HALF OF MY VENGEANCE, WASN'T IT, JON-KENT?

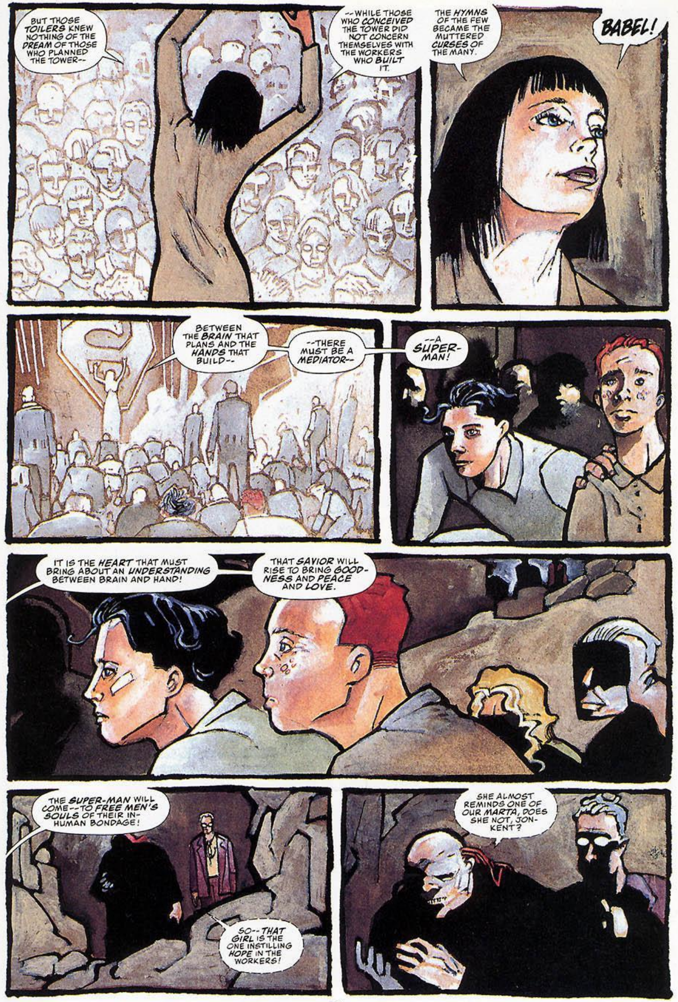
THE OTHER HALF WAS TO MECHANICALLY MES-MERIZE YOU--TRANSFORM YOU INTO A HUMAN MARIONETTE--
--TURN YOU INTO A MINDLESS TYRANT--THUS SPOIL-ING YOUR DREAM OF THE PERFECT CITY.
THE CITY NOW SERVES ONLY TO FEED MY APPETITES.
IT IS MY PERSONAL PLAY-GROUND--THE KALEIDOSCOPIC CANVAS UPON WHICH I PAINT--
"--A MASTER-PIECE OF PAIN AND MISERY."
OLSON...?!
CAN'T...TALK... CLARC-KENT...
MUST... KEEP THE MACHINE... FUNCTION-ING...
TH-THAT'S MY JOB NOW...
NO! YOU DON'T HAVE THE STRENGTH TO--
OHHHHH...
OLSON!
THE MACHINE--
WITE
SOMEONE MUST STAY WITH THE MACHINE!
UNTIL HOURS AGO, THIS MAN WAS A SECRETARY TO MY FATHER.
YOU SHOULD HAVE KNOWN HE WASN'T STRONG ENOUGH TO WORK DOWN HERE!
BUT SOMEONE MUST--
I WILL STAY AT THE MACHINE!
YOU?! BUT YOU'RE THE SON OF JON-KENT! HE WILL DISMISS ME IF ANYTHING HAPPENS TO YOU!
THEN YOU'D BETTER HOPE IT DOESN'T!
OLSON--FROM THIS INSTANT, YOU AND I EXCHANGE LIVES.
LEAVE NOW--AND NEVER COME BACK!

FROM THIS MOMENT, I AM NOTHING BUT A COG--
--A COG IN THE MACHINE!
BUT SOMETHING HAS GONE AMISS IN MY CITY--
--THE CITY I SECRETLY CONTROL THROUGH YOU, JON-KENT!
FOR MONTHS NOW, WE HAVE BEEN FINDING THESE PLANS IN THE WORKERS' CLOTHING.
THEIR VERY EXISTENCE SHOWS THAT SOMETHING IS MYSTERIOUSLY INTERFERING WITH THE WORKINGS OF METROPOLIS.
SOMETHING--SOMEONE--HAS APPEARED WHICH IS GIVING THE WORKERS HOPE.
THAT HOPE MUST BE CRUSHED.
BUT WHAT DO THESE CODED PLANS MEAN?
BEFORE I CAN STRIKE--THEY MUST BE DECRYPTED!
The man before the machine is no longer a human being...
F-FATHER...
...merely a dripping piece of exhaustion, from whose pores the last powers of volition are oozing out in large drops of sweat.
Its hand does not hold the lever--but claws it in desperation.
I, TOO... AM FAIL-ING YOUR CITY...
...FAILING YOU!
I DIDN'T KNOW--THAT TEN HOURS--COULD BE SUCH TORTURE!
BUT I WON'T SURRENDER TO WEAK-NESS.
I WILL NOT!

EEEEEEEEEEEE!
WHAT'S... THAT?
HAS THE MACHINE BROKEN?
CLARC-- DIDN'T YOU HEAR THE SIREN?
IT'S TIME FOR ANOTHER TO TAKE YOUR PLACE.
THAT'S THE END OF THE SHIFT.
BUT, COME THIS WAY--QUIETLY.
SHE HAS CALLED ANOTHER MEETING.
"SHE"...?
I'VE DONE IT!
I'VE FINALLY SHATTERED THEIR ACCURSED CODE!
THESE ARE PLANS OF THE ANCIENT CATACOMBS!
BUT--WHAT IS DOWN THERE THAT INTERESTS THE WORKERS?
WE MUST GO SEE, MUST WE NOT, JON-KENT?
YES, I'M SO GLAD YOU AGREE WITH ME--

--AS YOU ALWAYS HAVE--
--EVER SINCE THE DEATH OF OUR BELOVED MARTA.
WHERE MY HOUSE ENDS--
--ANOTHER WORLD BEGINS.
A WORLD OF STYGIAN DARKNESS--
--FAR BENEATH EVEN THE LOWEST LEVELS OF THE WORKERS' CITY.
AH! THERE THEY ARE NOW!
BUT--THIS IS ALMOST BEYOND BELIEF!
THE WORKERS MUST BE EXHAUSTED ALMOST TO THE POINT OF DEATH FROM LABORING MORE THAN HALF OF EVERY DAY--
--YET THEY ARE SHAMBLING HERE FROM EVERY POINT OF THE CITY.
WHY??

WHY, OLSEN?
WHY HAVE YOU BROUGHT ME HERE?
SHHH! IT'S SO THAT YOU MIGHT SEE--
--HER!
MY BROTHERS...
TODAY I WILL TELL YOU THE STORY OF THE NEW TOWER OF BABEL!
IT'S... SHE!
THERE WERE MEN WHO WISHED TO BUILD A TOWER WHOSE SUMMIT WOULD TOUCH THE SKIES.
AND ON IT THEY WOULD INSCRIBE: "GREAT IS THE WORLD AND ITS CREATOR, AND GREAT IS MAN!"
THOSE WHO CONCEIVED THE IDEA OF THIS TOWER COULD NOT HAVE BUILT IT THEMSELVES--
--SO THEY HIRED THOUSANDS OF OTHERS TO BUILD IT FOR THEM.


BUT THOSE TOILERS KNEW NOTHING OF THE DREAM OF THOSE WHO PLANNED THE TOWER--
--WHILE THOSE WHO CONCEIVED THE TOWER DID NOT CONCERN THEMSELVES WITH THE WORKERS WHO BUILT IT.
THE HYMNS OF THE FEW BECAME THE MUTTERED CURSES OF THE MANY.
BABEL!
BETWEEN THE BRAIN THAT PLANS AND THE HANDS THAT BUILD--
--THERE MUST BE A MEDIATOR--
--A SUPER-MAN!
IT IS THE HEART THAT MUST BRING ABOUT AN UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN BRAIN AND HAND!
THAT SAVIOR WILL RISE TO BRING GOODNESS AND PEACE AND LOVE.
THE SUPER-MAN WILL COME--TO FREE MEN'S SOULS OF THEIR INHUMAN BONDAGE!
SO--THAT GIRL IS THE ONE INSTILLING HOPE IN THE WORKERS!
SHE ALMOST REMINDS ONE OF OUR MARTA, DOES SHE NOT, JON-KENT?

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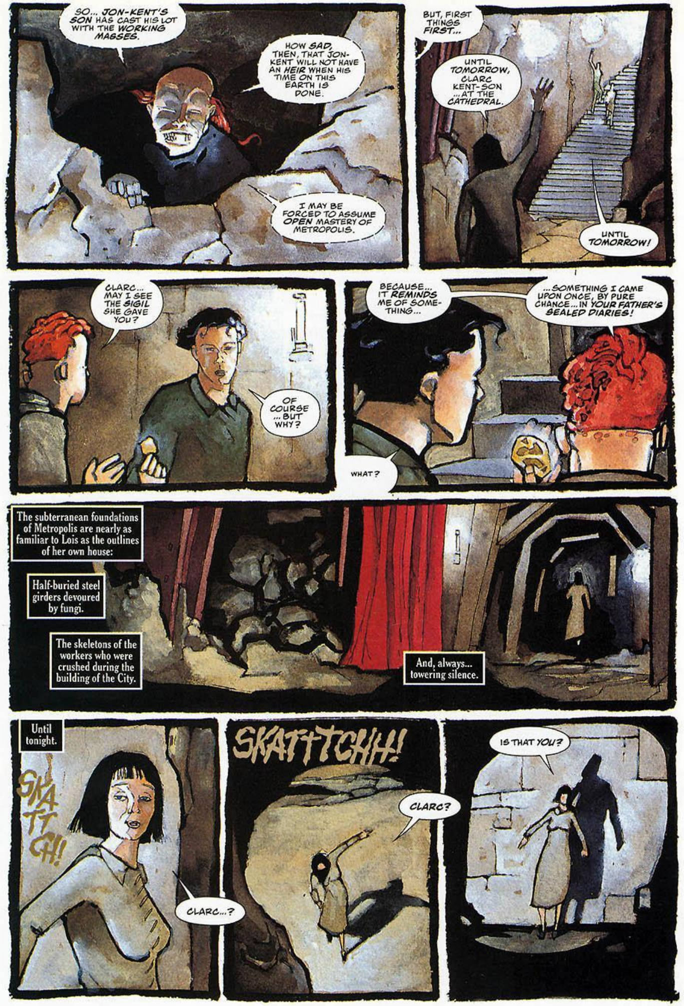

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Metropolis shines by night in an orgy of brightness.
For then it is that the searchlights, begin to play around the New Tower of Babel...
And there, in a wide bare room, the Master over Metropolis looks out on the City which is only nominally his.
An hour ago, he was not fully conscious of his complete and total servitude to the man called Lutor.
All that changed...when he looked upon the girl called Lois...
...and visions of Marta danced before his eyes, undoing the subtle enchantment of years.
Now he is aware, as never before, that he has been forced to betray his dream...
...to see it twisted into an abomination.
This must *end*.
And the shadows of all endings...
...are cast by their beginnings.

IN *HERE*, GIRL!
WHY HAVE YOU *BROUGHT* ME HERE?
DO YOU WORK FOR JON-KENT ?
HAHAHAHAHAHA!
ENTER.
WHAT--?
I HAVE CREATED A *MACHINE* IN THE IMAGE OF *MAN*--
--A MACHINE THAT NEVER *TIRES* OR MAKES A *MISTAKE*.

YET, BECAUSE OF AN OLD SCAR UPON MY HEART, I PREFERRED TO CAST MY MACHINE IN THE FORM OF A WOMAN.
I NAMED HER--FUTURA.
ON OCCASION, WHEN THE MELANCHOLY WAS UPON ME, I HAVE EVEN CALLED HER MARTA.
BUT AFTER TONIGHT, SHE SHALL BE KNOWN TO ALL AS--LOIS!
YOU MEAN FOR THAT--THING--TO TAKE MY PLACE?!
BUT WHY??
FROM THIS TIME FORWARD, WE SHALL HAVE NO FURTHER USE FOR LIVING WORKERS!
WASN'T IT WORTH THE LOSS OF A HAND TO HAVE CREATED THE WORKERS OF THE FUTURE-- THE MACHINE MEN?
I SHALL SEND MY ROBOT DOWN TO SOW DIS-CORD AMONG THE WORKERS, AND DESTROY THEIR CONFIDENCE IN YOU.
THEY SHALL REBEL PITEOUSLY--FUTILELY--AND BE DESTROYED--LIKE THE OUTMODED MACHINE-FOOD THEY ARE.
NO! I WON'T LET YOU--
KRAKKK!

SADLY, I HAVE BEEN FORCED TO HURT YOU--YOU, WHO HAVE THE SPIRIT OF MY ONCE-BELOVED IN YOU.
FORTUNATELY, WHAT HAS BEEN MARRED IN THE FLESH--CAN BE MADE PERFECT IN METAL...!
The New Tower of Babel:
I DON'T LIKE THIS, OLSON...
INVADING MY FATHER'S SANCTUM...
HERE, ONE CAN ONLY LEARN THINGS ONE SHOULD NOT KNOW.
LOOK...
THE DIARY I SPOKE OF!
YOUR FATHER HIMSELF HAS BEEN READING IT!
AND SEE HERE, UPON IT...
THE SIGIL OF THE SAVIOR?
THE SUPER-MAN?
OR BOTH?
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA

MY FUTURA--
MY MORE-THAN-METAL MARTA--
I HAVE BROUGHT YOUR ULTIMATE IDENTITY TO YOU...
HER NAME IS LOIS.
SHE IS NOT LIKE YOU, FUTURA.
YOU ARE COLDER THAN ICE... AND HARDER THAN ANY STONE.
THE TIP OF YOUR FINGER CUTS THROUGH A DIAMOND AS THOUGH IT WERE WATER.
YET, THAT HARDNESS MUST BE HIDDEN--
--BENEATH A DECEPTIVE VENEER--
--OF SOFT SKIN AND LOVING FEATURES.

I SHALL BECOME A THIEF OF YOU, MY LOIS.
AND THAT WHICH I STEAL FROM YOU--
--I SHALL PLACE WITHIN THIS VESSEL MADE OF A METAL THAT FELL FROM THE STARS.
I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT BASE LIE ABOUT THE FIRST HUMAN ON EARTH BEING A MAN.
IF A MALE GOD CREATED THE WORLD, THEN HE CERTAINLY CREATED WOMAN FIRST--
--AS I CREATED YOU, MY FUTURA.
BUT YOU ARE NOT YET FINISHED, ARE YOU?
NOT UNTIL I HAVE CREATED YOU A SECOND TIME--
--AS THE NEW LOIS!

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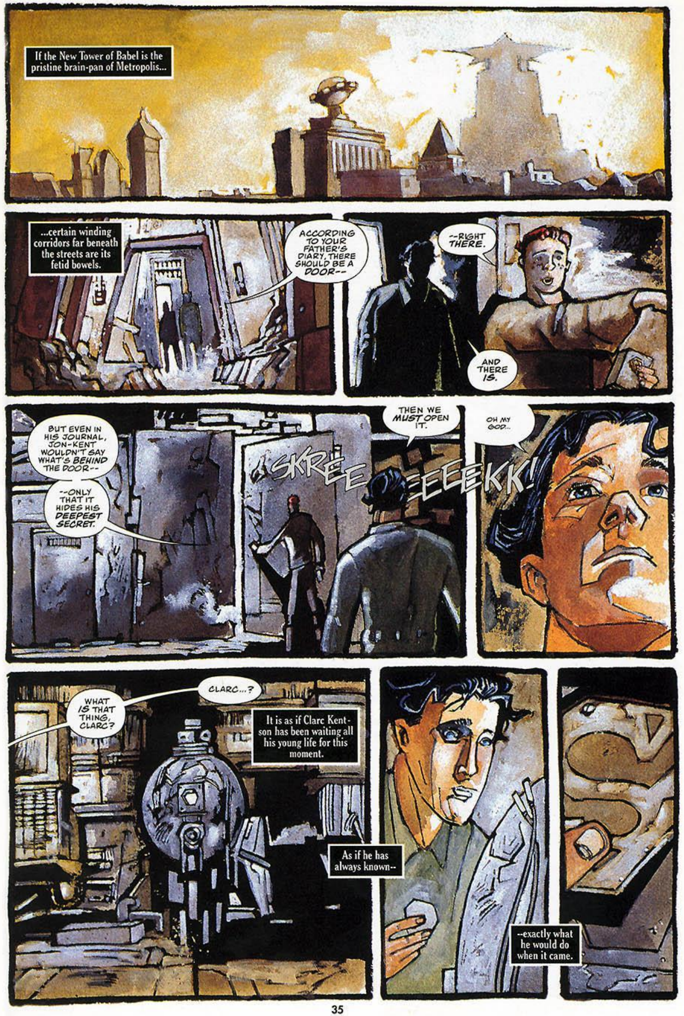

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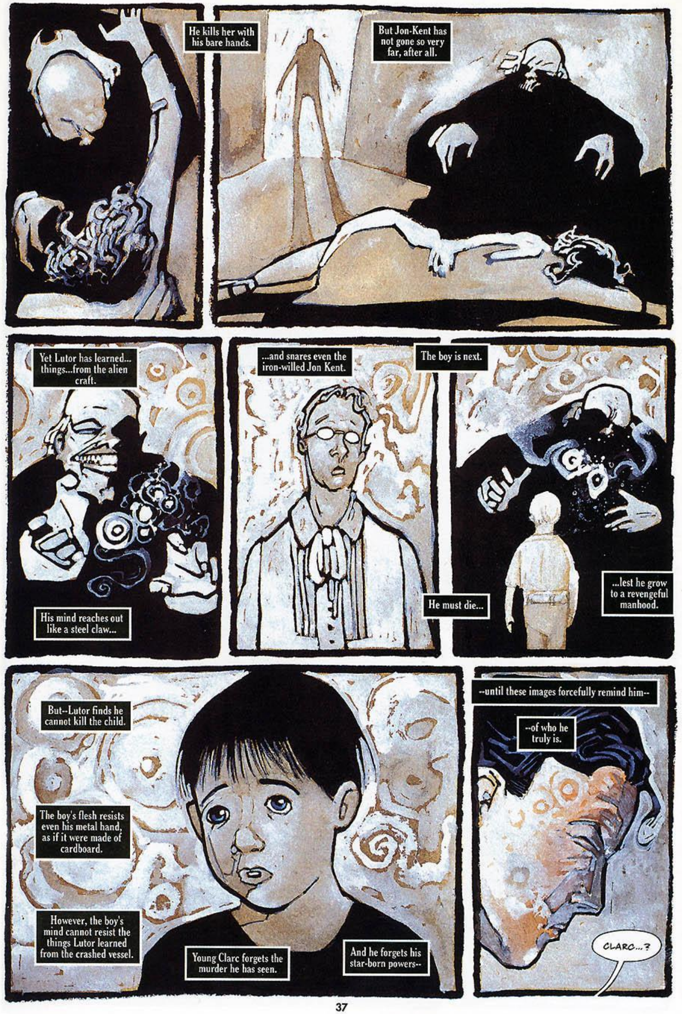

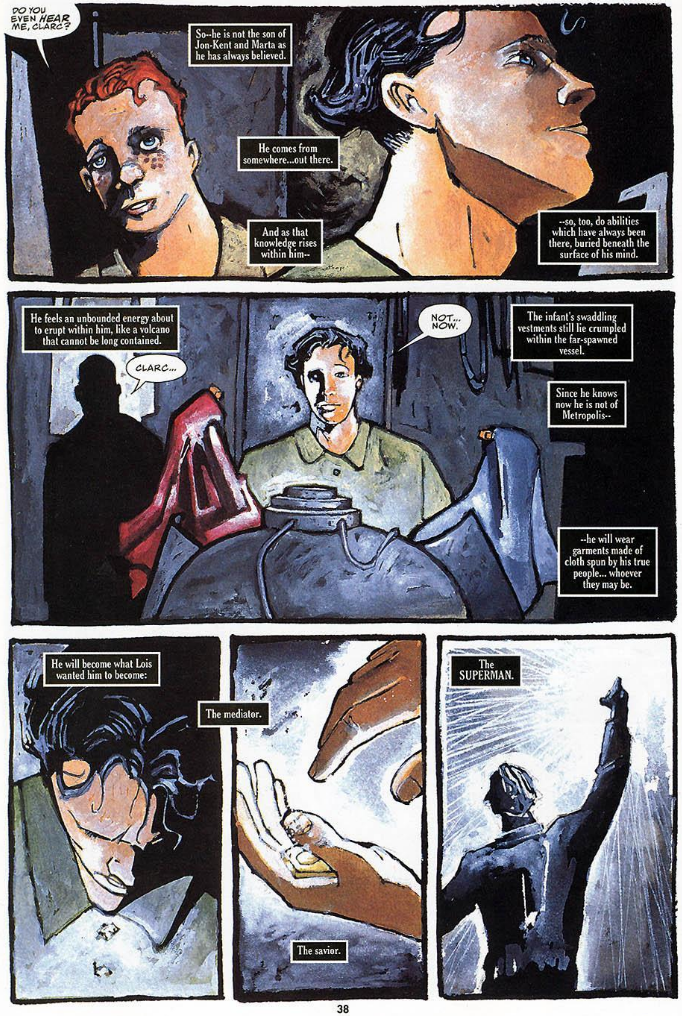
DO YOU EVEN HEAR ME, CLARC?
So--he is not the son of Jon-Kent and Marta as he has always believed.
He comes from somewhere...out there.
And as that knowledge rises within him--
--so, too, do abilities which have always been there, buried beneath the surface of his mind.
He feels an unbounded energy about to erupt within him, like a volcano that cannot be long contained.
CLARC...
NOT... NOW.
The infant's swaddling vestments still lie crumpled within the far-spawned vessel.
Since he knows now he is not of Metropolis--
--he will wear garments made of cloth spun by his true people... whoever they may be.
He will become what Lois wanted him to become:
The mediator.
The savior.
The SUPERMAN.

A vault, like the vault of a sepulchre...
Human heads as closely crowded as dirt clods in a freshly plowed field.
MY BROTHERS --I HAVE PREACHED PATIENCE...
BUT YOUR MEDIATOR HAS NOT COME--
--AND WILL NEVER COME!
THROUGH-OUT YOUR MORNING, YOUR MIDDAY, YOUR EVENING, YOUR NIGHT--THE MACHINE HOWLS FOR FOOD.
YOU ARE THE FOOD--THE LIVING FOOD!
THE MACHINE DEVOURS YOU LIKE FODDER--THEN SPEWS YOU UP AGAIN.
WHY DO YOU OIL THE JOINTS OF THE MACHINES WITH YOUR BRAINS AND YOUR BODIES, YOU FOOLS?
WHY DO YOU NOT LET THE MACHINES STARVE?
YOU ARE THE MASTERS OF THE MACHINES--YOU!
NOT THE OTHERS WHO WALK IN THEIR WHITE SILK!
WHAT SHALL WE DO, SISTER LOIS?
STAND THE WORLD ON ITS HEAD!
TAKE YOUR INHERITANCE--FROM THE LIVING AND FROM THE DEAD!

COME SEE FOR YOURSELF, JON-KENT!
THE WOMAN CALLED LOIS IS INCITING THE WORKERS TO REVOLT!
SHE TELLS THEM TO DESTROY EVERYTHING!
I--CAN'T BELIEVE IT!
YOU HAVE WAITED LONG ENOUGH, MY BROTHERS!
THE HOUR HAS COME!
IT'S... TRUE.
SURELY WE MUST CRUSH THE WORKERS--WHILE WE STILL CAN! AND THEN--
"AND THEN-- ALL HOPE WILL BE FOREVER EXTINGUISHED IN METROPOLIS."
WHAT DID YOU SAY, SIR?
JUST SOMETHING... WHICH SOMEONE ELSE SAID TO ME... A MILLION YEARS AGO.
TELL US WHAT TO DO, SISTER LOIS!
YOU KNOW WHAT YOU MUST DO.
DESTROY THE MACHINES.
HAVE YOU GONE MAD?
IF YOU SMASH THE MACHINES--
--YOU CONDEMN US ALL!

THROW YOURSELVES--A HUNDRED THOUSAND MURDERING FISTS-- UPON THE MACHINES --UPON THEIR MASTERS--
--AND STRIKE THEM DEAD!
YES!
LISTEN TO ME, BROTHERS!
YOU KNOW ME-- PERRY!
OUR... FOREMAN...
THIS CAN'T BE THE REAL LOIS WE'VE KNOWN!
SHE'S AN IMPOSTOR, INCITING US TO OUR DOOM!
HE IS ONE OF THEM, MY BROTHERS--
--ONE WHO SERVES THE MASTERS, WHILE PRETENDING TO BE ONE OF US.
WHAT IS THE PUNISHMENT FOR SUCH A ONE?
DEATH!
NOW COME--I WILL LEAD YOU!
WE HAVE PASSED SENTENCE OF DEATH UPON THE MACHINES!
DEATH TO THE MACHINES!
DEATH TO THE MACHINES!
PLEASE, LUTOR--

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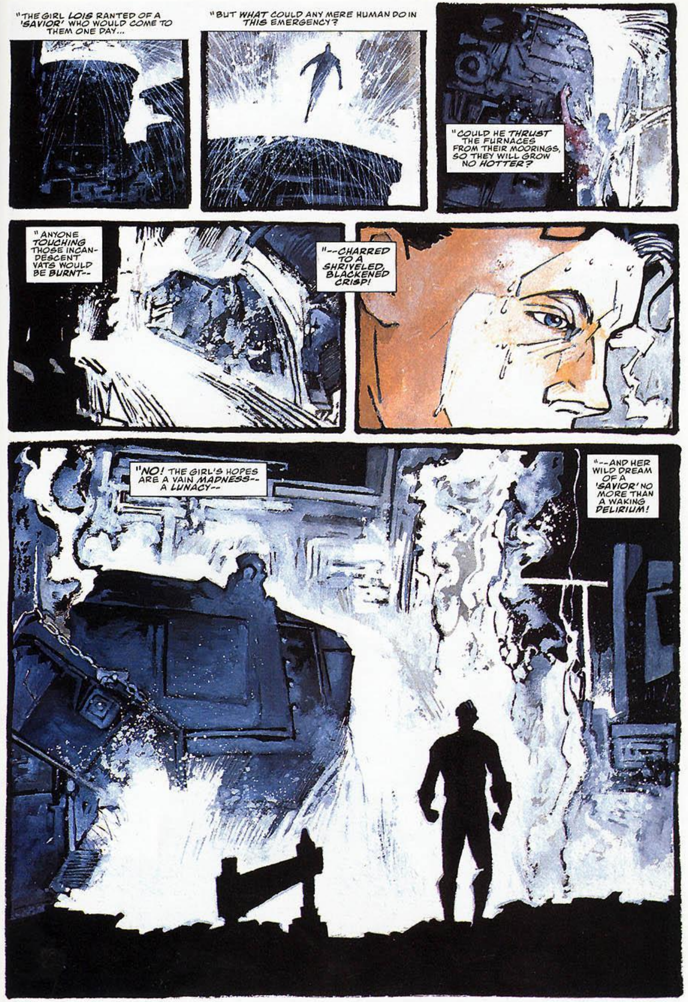
NO! STOP!
YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING!
"BUT SHE DOES!
"SHE HAS DISABLED THE MOLOCH MACHINE--
"AND NOW, THE OTHER MACHINES VOMIT FORTH A GREAT HISSING STREAM-- AS IF A MIGHTY FIST HAD OPENED A SLUICE IN HELL.
"GEYSERS OF MOLTEN METAL FOUNTAIN UP IN THE STREETS BETWEEN THEIR SHODDY SUBTERRANEAN TENEMENTS--
"--AS WOMEN AND CHILDREN SCRAMBLE FOR A SAFETY THAT NO LONGER EXISTS!"
ORDER OUR FORCES TO LET THEM DIE--
--AND TELL ME WHEN IT IS OVER.
HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA HAHAHAHA
"THAT IS WHAT...HE WANTS.
"NOTHING CAN SAVE THE WORKERS' SUNKEN WORLD!


"THE GIRL LOIS RANTED OF A 'SAVIOR' WHO WOULD COME TO THEM ONE DAY...
"BUT WHAT COULD ANY MERE HUMAN DO IN THIS EMERGENCY?
"COULD HE THRUST THE FURNACES FROM THEIR MOORINGS, SO THEY WILL GROW NO HOTTER?
"ANYONE TOUCHING THOSE INCANDESCENT VATS WOULD BE BURNT--
"--CHARRED TO A SHRIVELED, BLACKENED CRISP!
"NO! THE GIRL'S HOPES ARE A VAIN MADNESS-- A LUNACY--
"--AND HER WILD DREAM OF A 'SAVIOR' NO MORE THAN A WAKING DELIRIUM!

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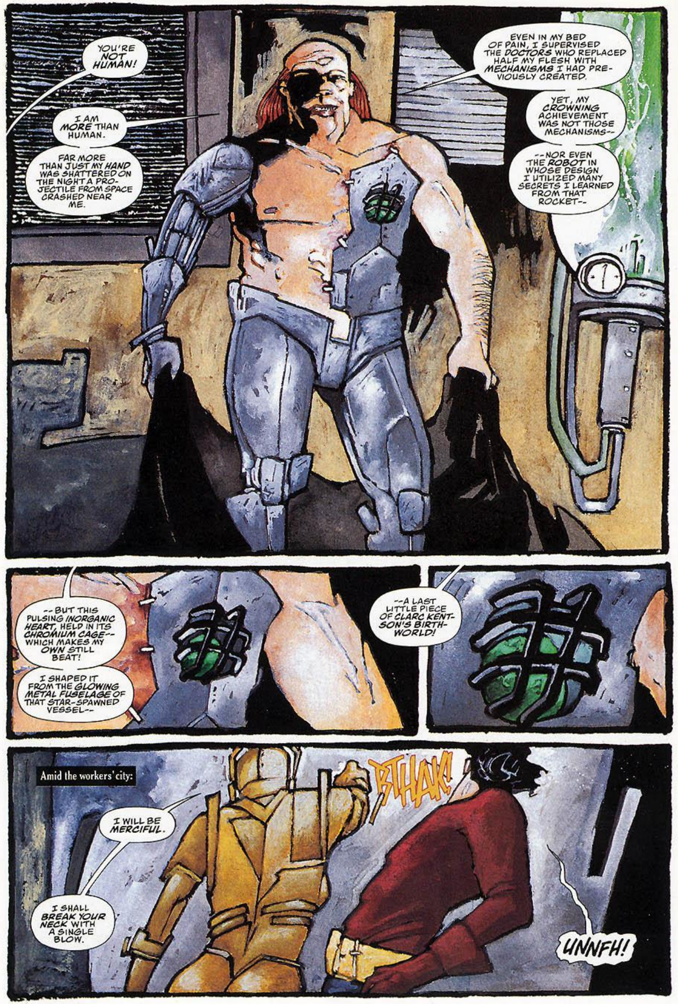
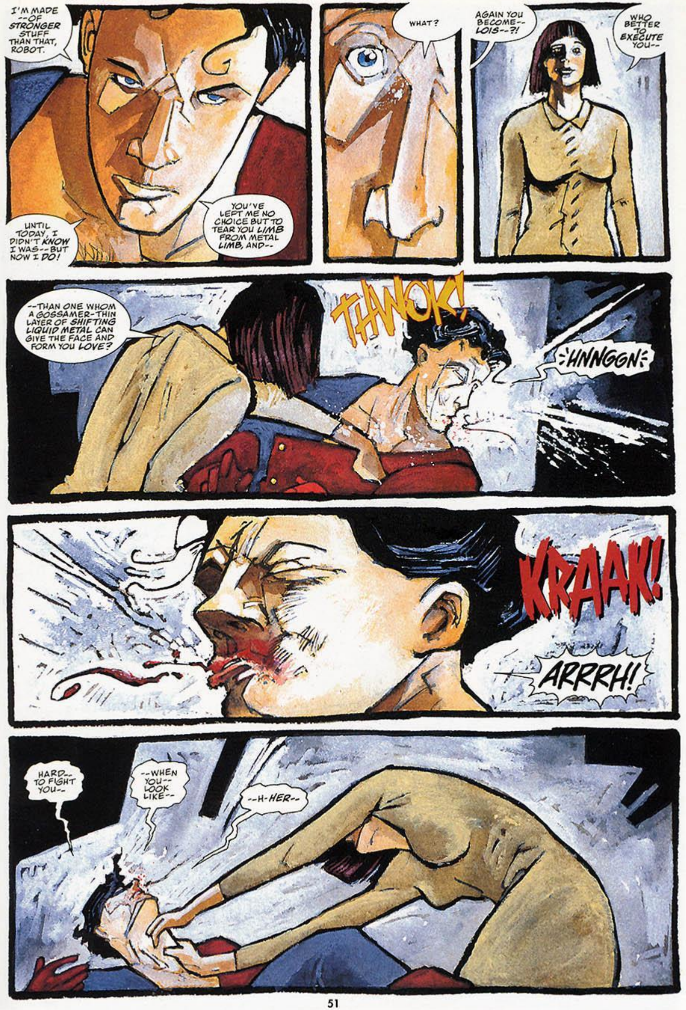
FORGET THEM! THEY ARE WORMS THAT BURROW BENEATH THE EARTH.
YOU SOAR ABOVE IT LIKE A WINGLESS EAGLE--
--AND YOU CHANGE THE COURSE OF MIGHTY, MOLTEN RIVERS WITH YOUR BARE HANDS!
FORGET THE WORKERS? BUT THEY ARE YOUR CAUSE, LOIS!
I'VE LEARNED SO MUCH ABOUT MYSELF TODAY--AND I'VE COME TO MAKE THEM MINE, AS WELL.
TOGETHER, WE CAN--
DON'T SAY ANYTHING MORE. JUST--
--KISS ME.
YOU'RE--
--NOT LOIS!
NO.
I AM SOMETHING BETTER.
SO MUCH BETTER...
...THAT I'LL SOON MAKE YOU FORGET THAT ANYONE NAMED LOIS EVER EXISTED!

WE ARE THE FUTURE, YOU AND I.
JOIN ME--AND WHEN LUTOR SO COMMANDS, WE WILL TURN AND GRIND THE HUMAN VERMIN UNDERFOOT!
LUTOR?! I SUSPECTED AS MUCH! BUT YOU AND I ARE DIFFERENT KINDS OF FUTURES!
YOU ARE THE MACHINE--
--WHILE I AM BOTH MAN--AND SUPER-MAN!
YOU DEFY ME--AND THE ONE WHO MADE ME?
THEN I WAS WRONG. FOR THE FIRST TIME WITHIN MEMORY, A MACHINE HAS MADE A MISTAKE.
YOU ARE NOT THE FUTURE.
IN FACT, YOU HAVE NO FUTURE--
--BEYOND A VERY HUMAN GRAVE!
The crooked house in the midst of Metropolis:
THAT YOUNG FOOL HAS WRECKED MY PLANS!
THE PLANS OF A MADMAN!
IF ALL THE MACHINES HAD BEEN DESTROYED, AND THE WORKERS CRUSHED--
--WHAT WOULD THAT HAVE GAINED YOU THAT YOU DON'T ALREADY HAVE?
DO YOU TRULY NOT KNOW?
NEW MACHINES WERE TO BE BUILT ON THE RUINS OF THE OLD--MACHINES WHICH HAD NO NEED OF MORTAL WORKERS!
NOR WOULD I NEED, IN THAT BOLD NEW WORLD, HUMAN CONDUITS LIKE JON-KENT!
FOR, NOW AND FOREVERMORE, I WOULD BE THE CONDUIT!
Ohhhhh



YOU'RE NOT HUMAN!
I AM MORE THAN HUMAN.
FAR MORE THAN JUST MY HAND WAS SHATTERED ON THE NIGHT A PROJECTILE FROM SPACE CRASHED NEAR ME.
EVEN IN MY BED OF PAIN, I SUPERVISED THE DOCTORS WHO REPLACED HALF MY FLESH WITH MECHANISMS I HAD PREVIOUSLY CREATED.
YET, MY CROWNING ACHIEVEMENT WAS NOT THOSE MECHANISMS--
--NOR EVEN THE ROBOT IN WHOSE DESIGN I UTILIZED MANY SECRETS I LEARNED FROM THAT ROCKET--
--BUT THIS PULSING INORGANIC HEART, HELD IN ITS CHROMIUM CAGE--WHICH MAKES MY OWN STILL BEAT!
I SHAPED IT FROM THE GLOWING METAL FUSELAGE OF THAT STAR-SPAWNED VESSEL--
--A LAST LITTLE PIECE OF CLARC KENTSON'S BIRTHWORLD!
Amid the workers' city:
BTHAK!
I WILL BE MERCIFUL.
I SHALL BREAK YOUR NECK WITH A SINGLE BLOW.
UNNFH!



I'M MADE OF STRONGER STUFF THAN THAT, ROBOT.
UNTIL TODAY, I DIDN'T KNOW I WAS--BUT NOW I DO!
YOU'VE LEFT ME NO CHOICE BUT TO TEAR YOU LIMB FROM METAL LIMB, AND--
WHAT?
AGAIN YOU BECOME--LOIS--?!
WHO BETTER TO EXECUTE YOU--
--THAN ONE WHOM A GOSSAMER-THIN LAYER OF SHIFTING LIQUID METAL CAN GIVE THE FACE AND FORM YOU LOVE?
THWOK!
HNNGGN!
KRAAK!
ARRRH!
HARD--TO FIGHT YOU--
--WHEN YOU--LOOK LIKE--
--H-HER--

--BUT I MUST!
SPRANG!
CLARC KENT-SON! DON'T LET HER PULL THAT LEVER!
IF SHE DOES, THE WHITE-HOT FURNACES WILL STILL TOPPLE OVER--
--AND SPILL THEIR DEADLY CONTENTS!
JON-KENT!
JON-KENT!

CALL YOUR "SON," JON-KENT!
DRAW HIM HERE TO YOUR TOWER--WHERE I CAN TRAP AND SLAY HIM!
WHERE ARE YOU, MAN?
DON'T THINK YOU CAN HIDE FROM ME!
I'M NOT HIDING, LUTOR.
YOU EXPENDED YOUR LAST BIT OF CONTROL OVER ME WHEN YOU FORCED ME TO LET THE WORKERS RUN AMOK--
--THREATENING EVERYTHING I HAVE SPENT MY LIFE BUILDING--
--AND NOW I AM FREE OF YOU AT LAST!
FREE? YOU WANT TO BE FREE?
THERE IS NO FREEDOM FROM LUTOR--
--BUT IN THE SHADOW OF DEATH!
THEN --LET IT COME.
With each battering blow--each quicksilver movement--Clarc BECOMES yet more of what he has always truly BEEN:
A being from ANOTHER WORLD--
--whose ALIENNESS and ABILITIES were long hidden from him by a techno-hypnotic fog.
KTHANG!

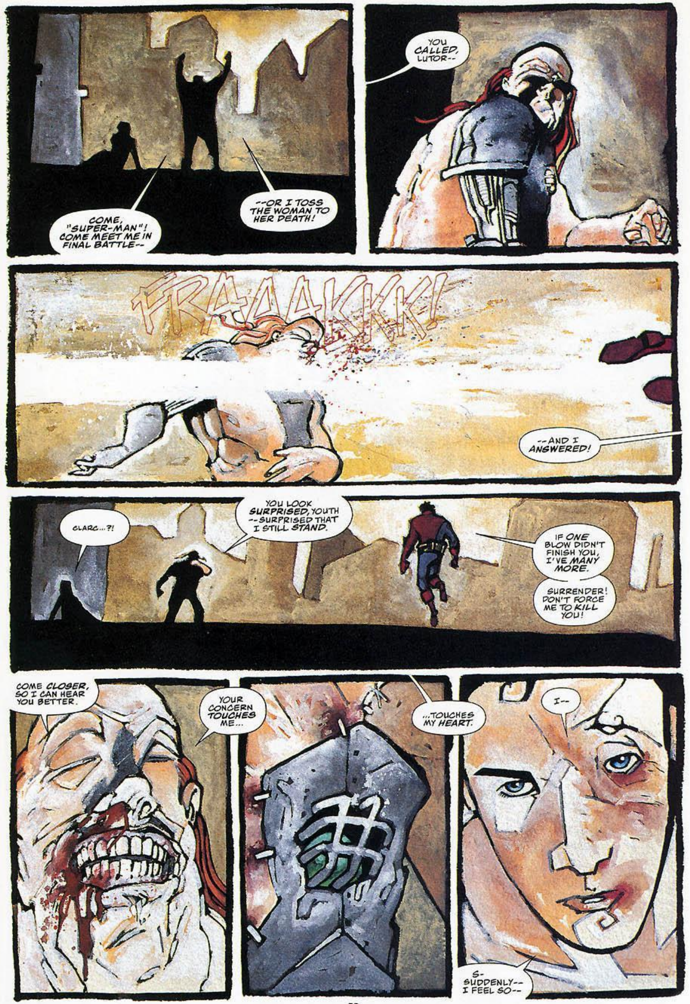
But the ROBOT has been created from that SELFSAME unearthly technology--
SWAAK!
--unsullied and unswayed by human weaknesses or emotions.
They are the LAST TWO LIVING EMBODIMENTS of a science that perished when a distant planet exploded--
--and EACH is determined to be the ONLY ONE remaining.
SPKANNG!
Yet, the WILL TO LIVE is strong--
--even in a creature of animate METAL--
MERCY...

YOU, WHO TRIED TO DESTROY THIS CITY--YOU DARE PLEAD FOR MERCY FROM THE ADOPTED SON OF THE MASTER OVER METROPOLIS?
IF NOT MERCY-- FOR FUTURA--
--THEN PERHAPS--
--FOR YOUR LOIS?!
FOR-- THERE WAS NEVER ANY OTHER LOIS-- BUT ME--!
YOU'RE SAYING-- YOU WERE LOIS, ALL ALONG?! IT'S TRUE I'VE NEVER SEEN THE TWO OF YOU TOGETHER--YET--!
STAY HERE AND DON'T MOVE WHILE I--
NO!
YOU'RE NOT THE LOIS I KNEW!
YOU CANNOT BE!
BUT IF YOU ARE-- THEN EVERYTHING THAT I THOUGHT I KNEW WAS MERELY A SHAM--

THWOK!
--AND IT MUST END!
SPLUUSSH!

FATHER--!
MY SON...
AM I YOUR SON? OR A SON OF THE STARS?
B-BOTH...
BUT... I LOVED YOU... NO LESS... FOR THAT.
YOU WERE THE CHILD... MARTA AND I WANTED... AND WHICH LUTOR COULD NEVER HAVE.
HE MURDERED HER FIRST... NOW ME.
DON'T LET HIM... MURDER... METROPOLISSS

CLARC!
LUTOR IS HOLDING LOIS--OR AT LEAST IT LOOKS LIKE LOIS--ATOP THE CATHEDRAL!
LOIS?
THEN THE ROBOT WAS LYING...?
I MUST KNOW!
WHERE DID HE GO??


COME, "SUPER-MAN"! COME MEET ME IN FINAL BATTLE--
--OR I TOSS THE WOMAN TO HER DEATH!
YOU CALLED, LUTOR--
FRAAAKKK!
--AND I ANSWERED!
CLARC...?!
YOU LOOK SURPRISED, YOUTH --SURPRISED THAT I STILL STAND.
IF ONE BLOW DIDN'T FINISH YOU, I'VE MANY MORE.
SURRENDER! DON'T FORCE ME TO KILL YOU!
COME CLOSER, SO I CAN HEAR YOU BETTER.
YOUR CONCERN TOUCHES ME...
...TOUCHES MY HEART.
I--
S-SUDDENLY--I FEEL SO--

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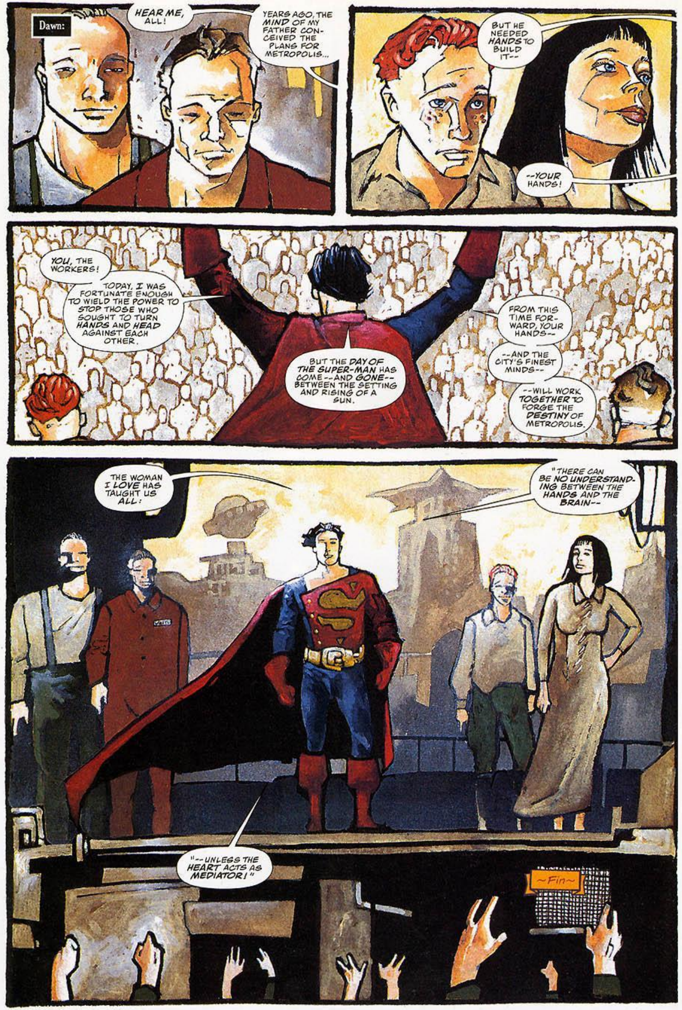
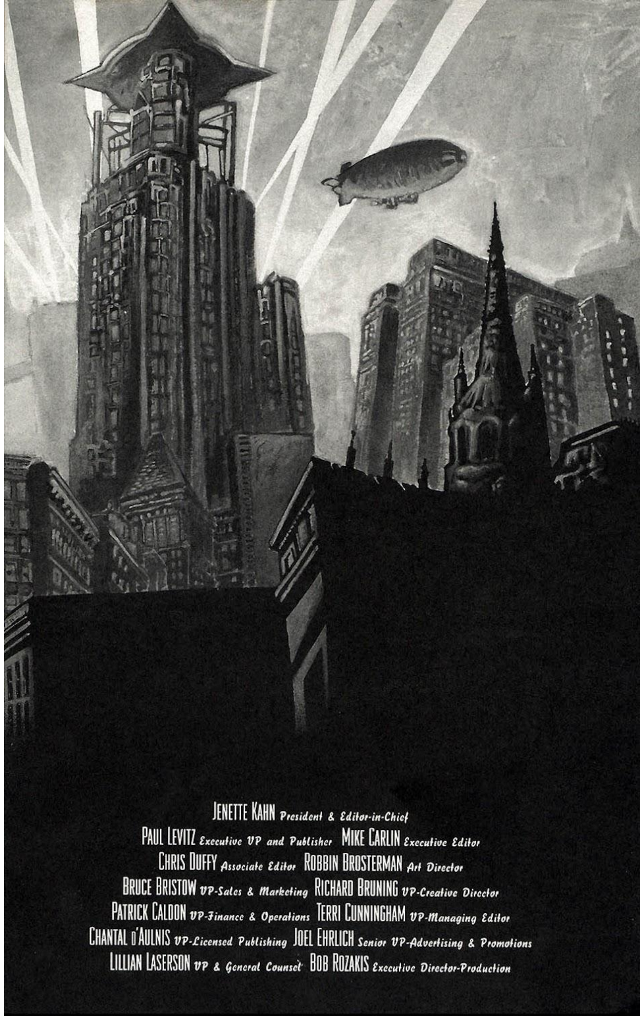
UHHHNNN...
M-MARTA...
BADOOOMM!

LUTOR'S SPELL ON METROPOLIS IS *BROKEN* FOREVER.
BUT--THE *WORKERS*--MANY OF THEIR HOMES ARE *RUINED.*
WE WILL *REPLACE* THEM WITH *BETTER* ONES.
THEN YOU TRULY *ARE* THEIR SAVIOR.
AND *YOU*--ARE THE *REAL* LOIS?!
IT'S WITHIN YOUR POWER TO FIND OUT.





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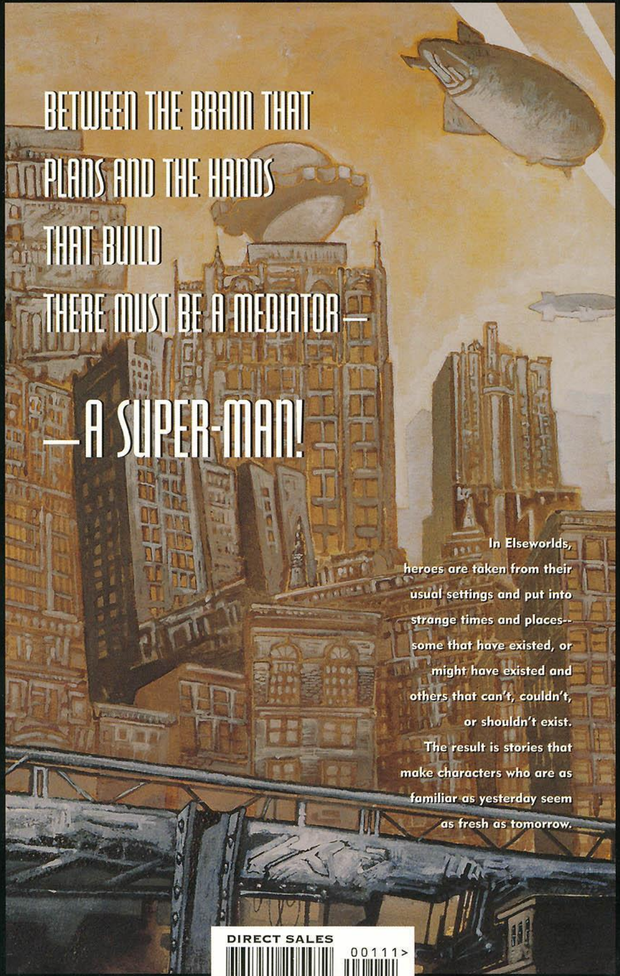

BETWEEN THE BRAIN THAT
PLANS AND THE HANDS
THAT BUILD
THERE MUST BE A MEDIATOR—

—A SUPER-MAN!

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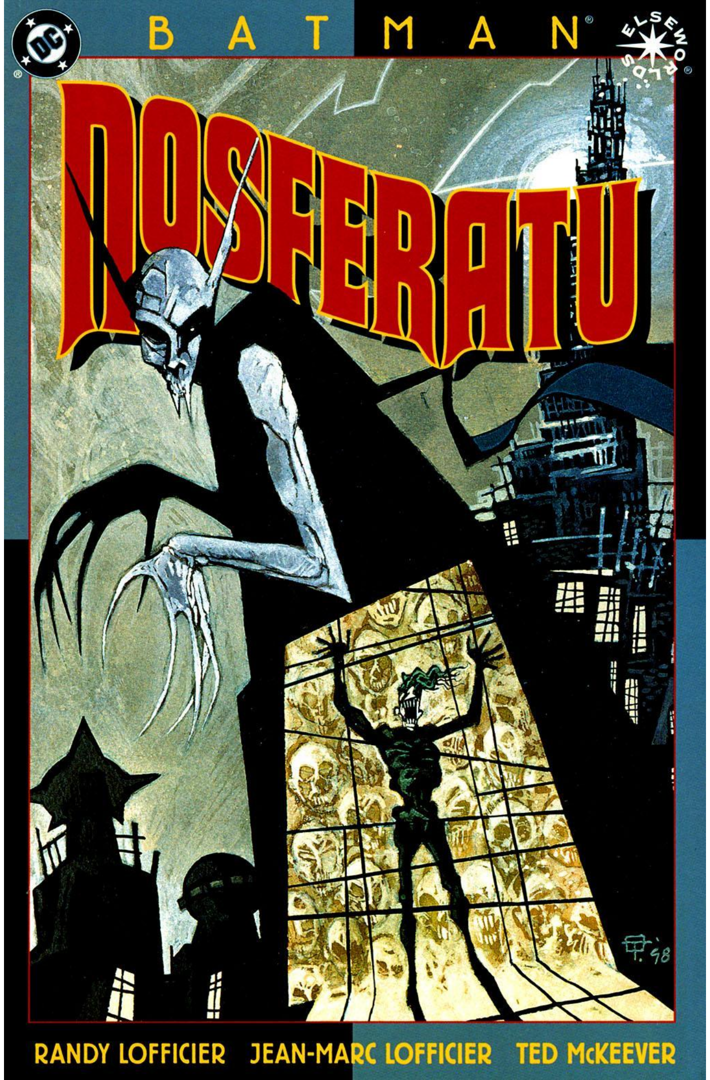

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NOSFERATU
RANDY LOFFICIER
JEAN-MARC LOFFICIER
TED McKEEVER

Cinematography **TED McKEEVER** *Screenplay* **RANDY & JEAN-MARC LOFFICIER** *Titles* **BILL OAKLEY** *Special Thanks* **ROY THOMAS**

BATMAN created by BOB KANE
SUPERMAN created by JERRY SIEGEL and JOE SHUSTER

BATMAN: NOSFERATU
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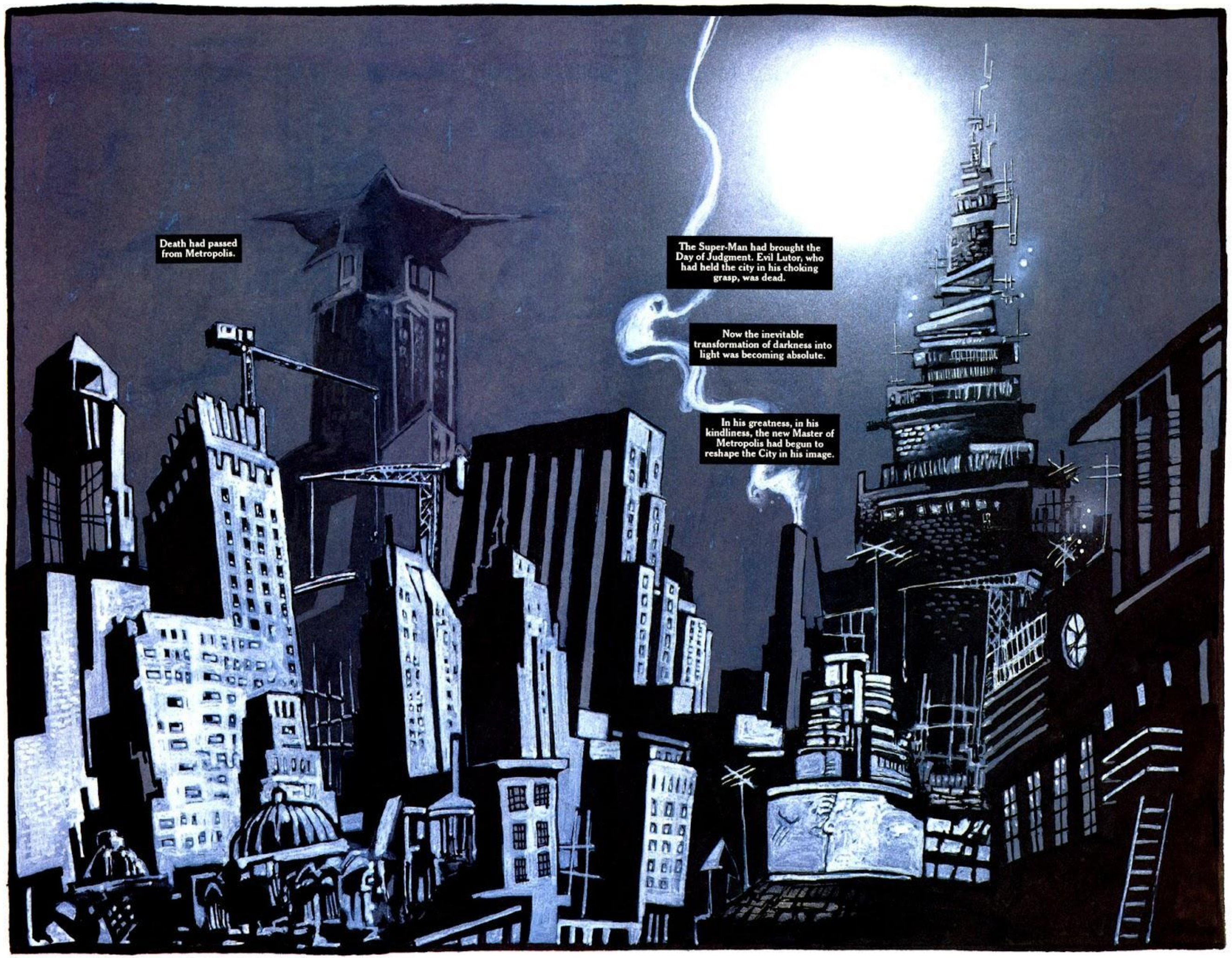
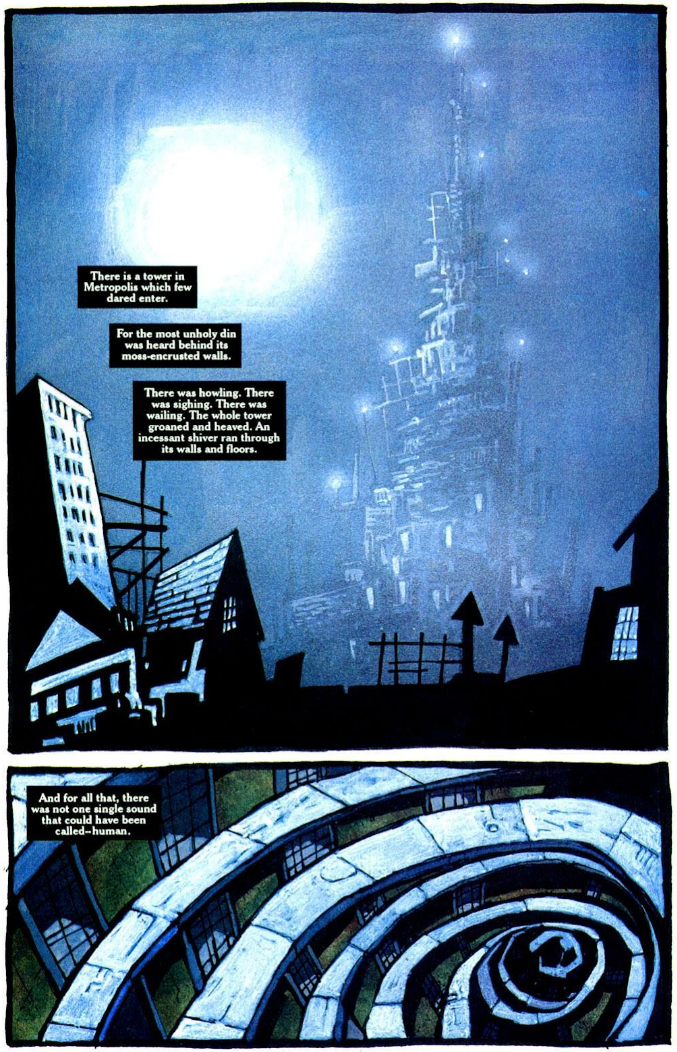

Death had passed from Metropolis.
The Super-Man had brought the Day of Judgment. Evil Lutor, who had held the city in his choking grasp, was dead.
Now the inevitable transformation of darkness into light was becoming absolute.
In his greatness, in his kindliness, the new Master of Metropolis had begun to reshape the City in his image.

For those for whom every revolution of a machine wheel still spun gold, life remained pleasurable in the undisturbed serenity of the "Eternal Gardens."
The milk-colored glass ceiling above it glowed like an opal in the light.
Their white silk clothing they wore but once, these Gilded Scions of Metropolis.
BRUSS WAYNE-SON, Eminent Doktor.
DIRK GRAY-SON, Master of Law, whose home it is.
WE BOTH LOVE HER...
WE MUST LET BARBARA CHOOSE--
--BUT WHATEVER HER CHOICE, WE SHALL ALWAYS REMAIN FRIENDS.

IS IT AGREED, THEN? WE'LL ASK HER TONIGHT.
TONIGHT?
AFTER THE PSYCHOMANCY. OR HAD YOU FORGOTTEN ALREADY?
I DON'T ;grunt; CARE MUCH FOR THESE "SEANCES." LOVE. DEATH. THE FUTURE--
--THINGS LIKE THAT SHOULD REMAIN HIDDEN.
In the dark.
Below.
MASTER BRUSS. MASTER DIRK. THE BATHS ARE READY.
AT LEAST MAKE AN APPEARANCE. EVERYONE WILL BE THERE. AND YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY: OUT OF SIGHT--
--OUT OF MIND.



There is a tower in Metropolis which few dared enter.
For the most unholy din was heard behind its moss-encrusted walls.
There was howling. There was sighing. There was wailing. The whole tower groaned and heaved. An incessant shiver ran through its walls and floors.
And for all that, there was not one single sound that could have been called--human.

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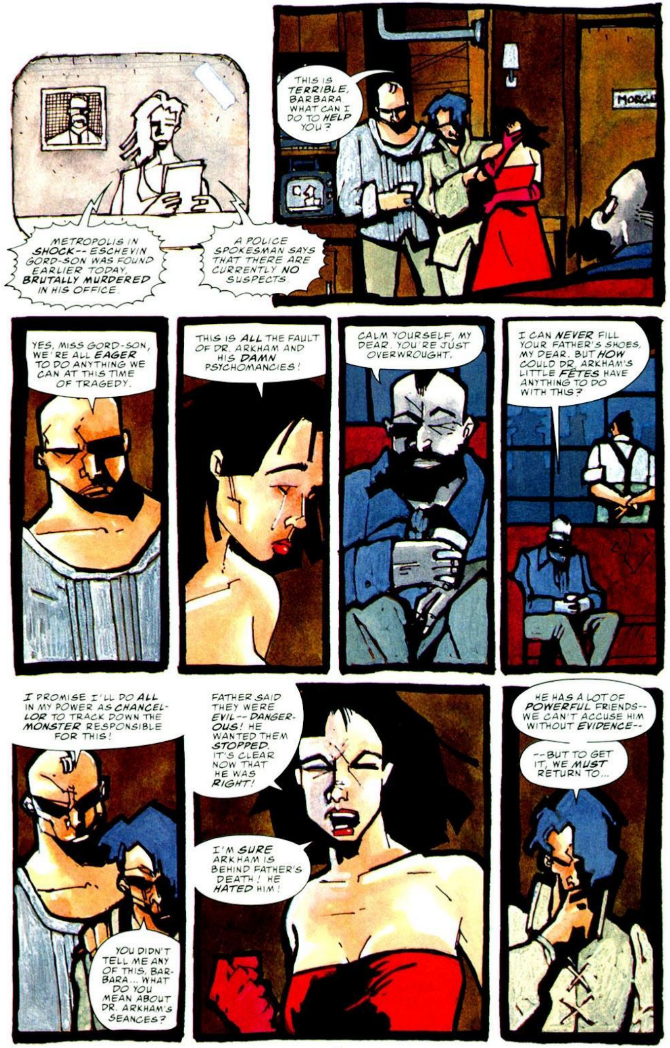
NOW APPEARING IN AN ENCORE PRESENTATION -- THE MIRACULOUS LAUGHING MAN!
BEFORE YOUR VERY EYES, MY PSYCHOMANCER WILL AWAKEN FROM HIS CATATONIC TRANCE!
LAUGHING MAN! DO YOU HEAR ME? IT IS I CALLING YOU: I, ARKHAM-- YOUR MASTER!
AWAKEN FOR A BRIEF WHILE FROM YOUR EVERLASTING NIGHT!
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, MY PSYCHOMANCER WILL NOW ANSWER ANY QUESTION YOU DESIRE TO PUT TO HIM.
HIS SCHIZOID HYSTERIA HAS FREED HIS MIND FROM THE BOUNDARIES OF TIME! HE KNOWS THE PAST-- AND CAN SEE INTO THE FUTURE.
TEST HIM FOR YOURSELVES!

I'D LIKE TO KNOW WHAT TOMORROW'S HEADLINE WILL BE...
The audience leans forward, transfixed with unholy craving.
The release comes, abruptly, violently, spasmodically.
DEATH!
At night, fear seemed to seep from the walls of the Asylum in which madness was housed.
The odor of it hung in thick layers throughout its passages.
The orderlies' movements, the soundlessness of their gestures evoked the image of ghostly deep-sea divers.
ROLL UP! ROLL UP!
THAT'S WHAT I CALL --ENTERTAINMENT!

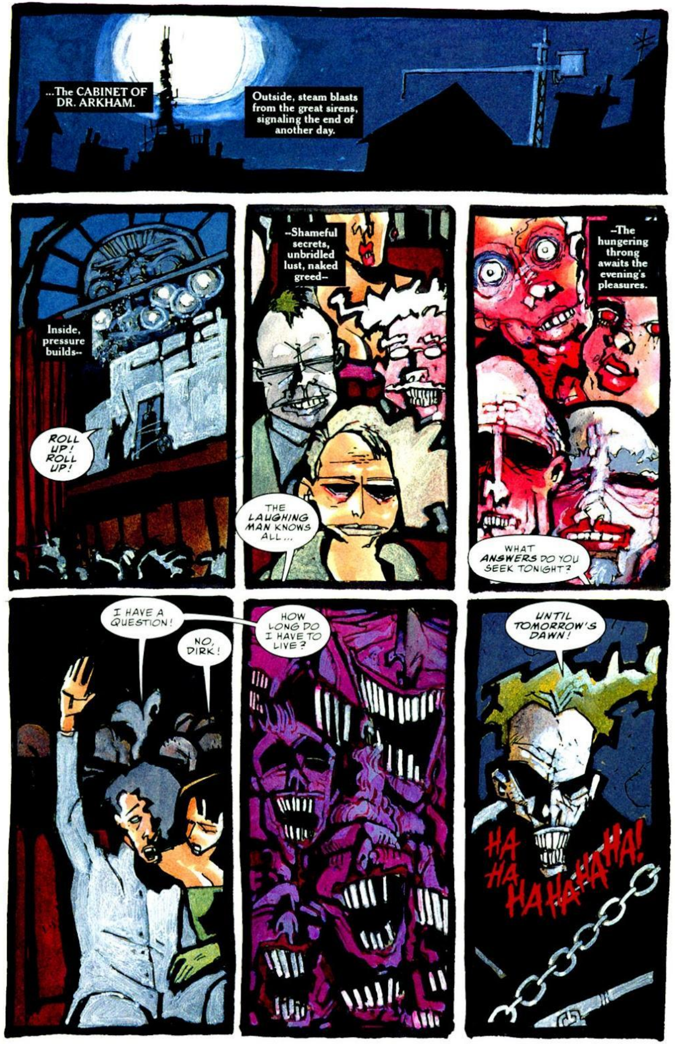
MY LAUGHING MAN WOULD MAKE HIS CREATOR PROUD!
I SEE THAT GOT A RISE OUT OF YOU--
--YOU REMEMBER, DON'T YOU?
"--THE PAIN--
"--WHEN LUTOR PAINSTAKINGLY ASSEMBLED YOU FROM THE BODIES OF MY PATIENTS--
"--SEEKING THE PERFECT UNION OF MAN AND MACHINE!"
I SOMETIMES WISH...
KOFF
IT'S YOU.
HOW DID IT GO WITH GORD-SON?
INTRACTABLE AS EVER...
A THREAT?
POSSIBLY.

"WELL, WE CAN'T ALLOW HIM TO MEDDLE NOW, ARKHAM.
"YOU KNOW WHAT WE'VE GOT TO DO--
"YOUR PET HASN'T HAD ANY EXERCISE LATELY, HAS HE?
"TONIGHT IS HIS CHANCE.
"WHAT IS THAT PHRASE YOU USE?
"ROLL UP! ROLL UP!"

There was once a madman who never left his cell.
An object of pity, an object of ridicule.
POLICE TOWER
He mirrored their mocking laughter.
WER
They called him THE LAUGHING MAN.
Then, LUTOR claimed him.
No one is laughing now.

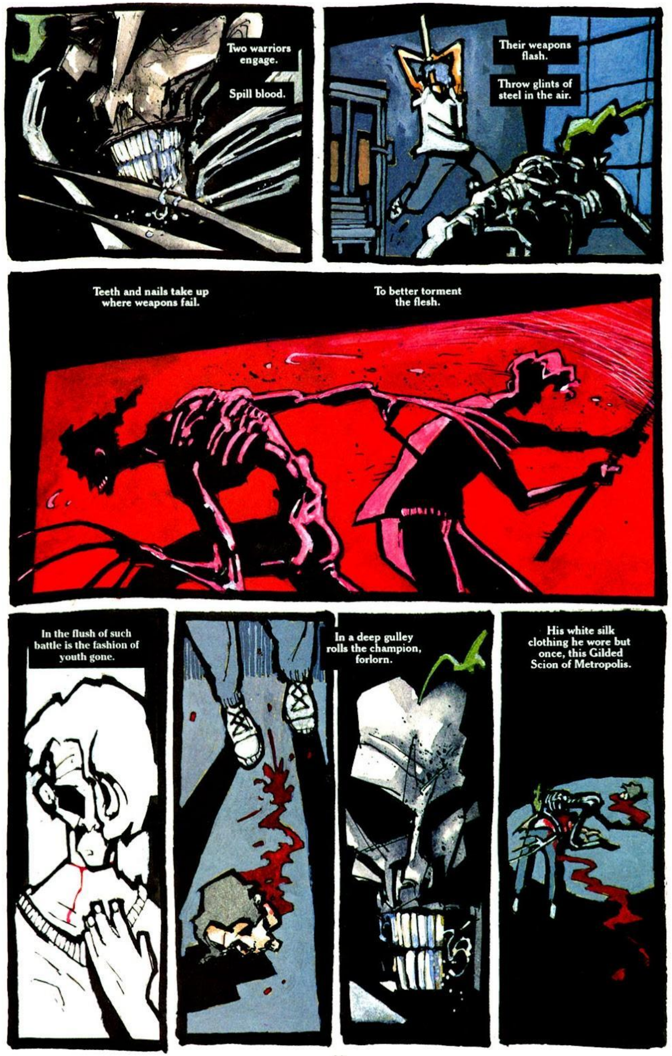


METROPOLIS IN SHOCK-- ESCHEVIN GORD-SON WAS FOUND EARLIER TODAY, BRUTALLY MURDERED IN HIS OFFICE.
A POLICE SPOKESMAN SAYS THAT THERE ARE CURRENTLY NO SUSPECTS.
THIS IS TERRIBLE, BARBARA. WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP YOU?
YES, MISS GORD-SON, WE'RE ALL EAGER TO DO ANYTHING WE CAN AT THIS TIME OF TRAGEDY.
THIS IS ALL THE FAULT OF DR. ARKHAM AND HIS DAMN PSYCHOMANCIES!
CALM YOURSELF, MY DEAR. YOU'RE JUST OVERWROUGHT.
I CAN NEVER FILL YOUR FATHER'S SHOES, MY DEAR. BUT HOW COULD DR. ARKHAM'S LITTLE FÊTES HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THIS?
I PROMISE I'LL DO ALL IN MY POWER AS CHANCEL-LOR TO TRACK DOWN THE MONSTER RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS!
YOU DIDN'T TELL ME ANY OF THIS, BAR-BARA... WHAT DO YOU MEAN ABOUT DR. ARKHAM'S SEANCES?
FATHER SAID THEY WERE EVIL-- DANGER-OUS! HE WANTED THEM STOPPED. IT'S CLEAR NOW THAT HE WAS RIGHT!
I'M SURE ARKHAM IS BEHIND FATHER'S DEATH! HE HATED HIM!
HE HAS A LOT OF POWERFUL FRIENDS-- WE CAN'T ACCUSE HIM WITHOUT EVIDENCE--
--BUT TO GET IT, WE MUST RETURN TO...


...The CABINET OF DR. ARKHAM.
Outside, steam blasts from the great sirens, signaling the end of another day.
Inside, pressure builds--
ROLL UP! ROLL UP!
--Shameful secrets, unbridled lust, naked greed--
THE LAUGHING MAN KNOWS ALL...
--The hungering throng awaits the evening's pleasures.
WHAT ANSWERS DO YOU SEEK TONIGHT?
I HAVE A QUESTION!
NO, DIRK!
HOW LONG DO I HAVE TO LIVE?
UNTIL TOMORROW'S DAWN!
HA HA HAHAHAHA!

THE ANSWER WAS GIVEN...
THE ACTION MUST BE TAKEN-- AFTER ALL, THE LAUGHING MAN KNOWS ALL!
BESIDES, GRAY-SON'S A TROUBLE-MAKER--
--METROPOLIS IS BETTER OFF WITHOUT HIM.
Life remained pleasurable in the undisturbed serenity of the "Eternal Gardens."
The milk-colored glass ceiling above glowed like an opal in the light.
As graceful as a bird in flight.
Movement is life.
But death's whisper is always close at hand.

HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA
?
SO WHAT ARE YOU, LAUGHING MAN?
ARKHAM'S TOOL? HIS MINDLESS PUPPET?
BUT NO MATTER--A PUPPET'S STRING CAN BE BROKEN--
HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA
--AND THE PUPPET MASTER EXPOSED!
EN GARDE!
THUNK


Two warriors engage.
Spill blood.
Their weapons flash.
Throw glints of steel in the air.
Teeth and nails take up where weapons fail.
To better torment the flesh.
In the flush of such battle is the fashion of youth gone.
In a deep gulley rolls the champion, forlorn.
His white silk clothing he wore but once, this Gilded Scion of Metropolis.

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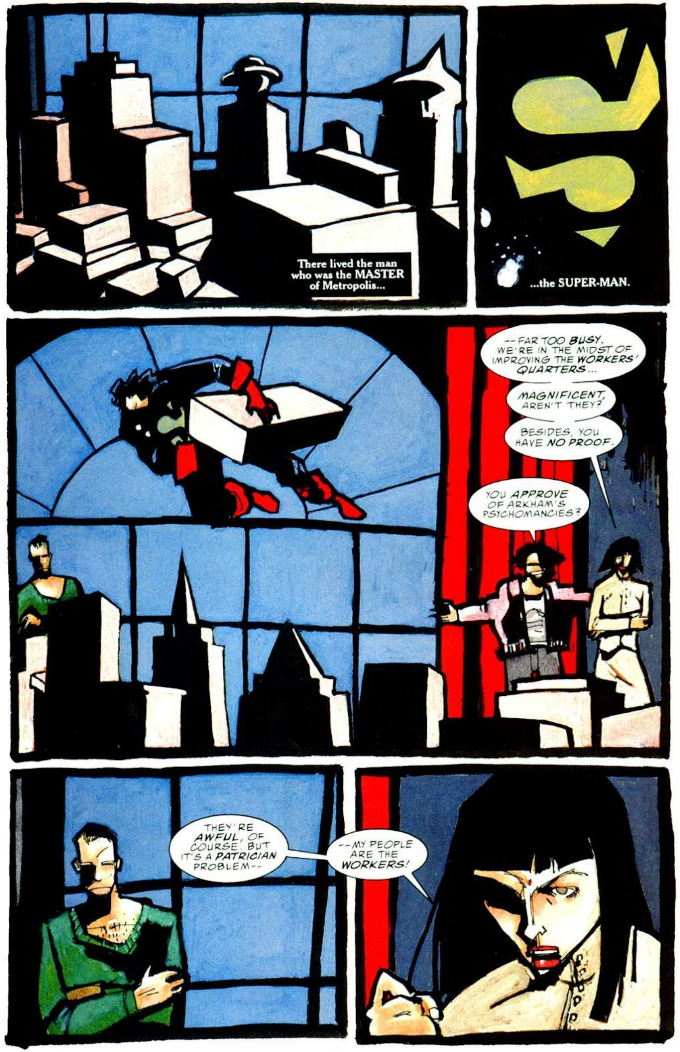
"...AND SO DO THE POLICE!"
SEE HERE, ESCHEVIN...
HOW COULD SOMEONE LIKE BANE HAVE GOTTEN INTO DIRK'S PLACE? THE WALLS ARE TOO STEEP...
HE FITS THE PROFILE--
HE MUST HAVE FOUND A WAY IN.
LOOK AT THE SAVAGERY! BANE'S NEVER KILLED LIKE THAT--
WHERE WAS HE WHEN GORD-SON WAS MURDERED?
I KNOW HOW CLOSE YOU AND GRAY-SON WERE--
--BUT YOU MUST TRUST IN THE POLICE. THEY KNOW BEST.
THAT PATRONIZING OLD FOOL!
THERE IS SOMEONE WHO MIGHT LISTEN...
LANA LANG-SON IS A GOOD FRIEND OF MINE --SHE CAN ARRANGE A MEET-ING WITH--
--CLARC-KENT!
There is a tower in Metropolis which shines like a beacon.


There lived the man who was the MASTER of Metropolis...
...the SUPER-MAN.
--FAR TOO BUSY. WE'RE IN THE MIDST OF IMPROVING THE WORKERS' QUARTERS...
MAGNIFICENT, AREN'T THEY?
BESIDES, YOU HAVE NO PROOF.
YOU APPROVE OF ARKHAM'S PSYCHOMANCIES?
THEY'RE AWFUL, OF COURSE, BUT IT'S A PATRICIAN PROBLEM--
--MY PEOPLE ARE THE WORKERS!

THIS EVIL IS EVERYONE'S PROBLEM!
PLEASE!
WORKERS DIE EVERY DAY AND I DON'T SEE THE PATRICIANS SO MUCH AS LIFT A FINGER TO HELP--
--WHY SHOULD THIS TAKE PRIORITY?
THIS EVIL GOES BEYOND --IT'S LUTOR'S EVIL!
LUTOR IS DEAD!
--BUT HIS EVIL LIVES ON.
In the dark.
HMMM...
I'LL LOOK INTO IT.
SORRY, BRUSS. I THOUGHT HE WOULD BE MORE HELPFUL...
IT'S NOT IMPORTANT. WE DON'T NEED HIS HELP.

"I SEE NOW WHERE DIRK MADE HIS MISTAKE...
"YOU DON'T LET YOUR PREY KNOW YOU'RE COMING AFTER IT...
"YOU TRACK IT...
"YOU FIND ITS LAIR...
"... AND THEN YOU STRIKE!"

There is a tower in Metropolis which few dare enter.
For the most unholy din was heard behind its moss-encrusted walls.
There was howling.
AT THE SIGNAL.
There was sighing.
MOVE FAST.
There was wailing.
SHRED THE GUARDS.
There was scheming.
PASS IT ON.

The tower groaned and heaved.
An incessant shiver ran through its walls and floors.
And for all that, there was not one single sound that could have been called—human.
It was, after all, the Cabinet of Dr. Arkham.
HA! HA! ROLL UP! ROLL UP! HA! HA!

I TOLD YOU WE'D BE A HIT! THEY ALL HAVE SECRETS -- THE PRIVILEGED ALWAYS DO...
YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING I'LL GIVE YOU THAT.
THE PATRICIANS ARE EASY MARKS. ONCE WE KNOW WHAT THEY'RE HIDING, THEY HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO DO AS WE SAY...
AND FOR THOSE WHO REBEL --
-- MY LAUGHING MAN MAKES THEM REGRET THEIR DIS-OBEDIENCE --
-- AND YOUR HANDS REMAIN PER-FECTLY CLEAN, N'EST-CE-PAS, CHANCELLOR?
GORD-SON'S DAUGHTER AND WAYNE-SON ARE STARTING TO ASK QUESTIONS.
"THEN MY LAUGHING MAN WILL JUST HAVE TO PAY THEM EACH A LITTLE VISIT..."

"AND WE DON'T EVEN HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT KENT AND HIS WOMAN INTER-FERING, eh, DOKTOR?"
THEY'RE TOO LOST IN THEIR DREAMS TO NOTICE WHAT'S GOING ON BENEATH THEM.
THE DEATH OF OUR DEAR, DEPARTED LUTOR WASN'T SUCH A LOSS AFTER ALL...
"YOU BECAME CHANCELLOR, AND I -- "
-- CAN AT LAST FULFILL MY LIFE'S DREAM OF TREATING ALL OF METROP-OLIS...
...AFTER ALL, A HEALTHY CITIZEN IS MERELY A MAN WHO DOESN'T KNOW HE'S ILL --
ping!
?

UP THERE! A SPY!
NO ONE MUST KNOW THAT I'M INVOLVED WITH YOU!
DON'T WORRY, MORGAN HENDERSON! HE CAN'T ESCAPE!
THE ONLY WAY OUT OF HERE IS--
Below.
--PAST MY ORDERLIES!
AT THE SIGNAL.
MOVE FAST.
SMASH
MOVE FAST!
SHRED THE GUARDS.
SHRED THE GUARDS.
PASS IT ON!
PASS IT ON!
PASS IT ON!

GRAB HIM! HE'S GETTING AWAY!
HE MUST BE MAD!
Below.
Ancient subroutines flutter.
THWAK!
NAUGHTY, NAUGHTY BOY!
"RUNNING FROM US LIKE A BAT OUT OF HELL!"
Frozen circuitry screeches back to artificial life.

:grumble:
NEXT TIME.
WE PUT THEM ALL BACK IN THEIR CAGES, DOKTOR.
DEAR, DEAR! THE EMINENT DOKTOR BRUSS WAYNE-SON!
YOU CAN'T KEEP ME HERE FOR-EVER, ARKHAM! PEOPLE WILL LOOK FOR ME!
KEEP YOU HERE, DEAR BOY?
I WOULDN'T DREAM OF EXPOSING MY OTHER PATIENTS TO THE RAVINGS OF A DELU-SIONAL SCHIZOPHRENIC...
YOU'RE CRAZIER THAN YOUR ENTIRE COLLECTION OF FREAKS!
I KNOW YOU KILLED DIRK, AND I'LL FIND A WAY TO MAKE YOU PAY!
IT ALWAYS BREAKS MY HEART, BUT EVERY DOCTOR MUST ACCEPT THAT THERE ARE PATIENTS THAT JUST CAN'T BE SAVED...
...THEY JUST GO OVER THE EDGE...
...LITERALLY.
Vast, inhuman intelligences awaken.
In the caverns below.

I'LL ARRANGE FOR A WITNESS TO HAVE SEEN HIM HEAD-ING INTO THE UNDER-WORLD--
Cold mentalities that exist only in the dark reach out.
And probe.
--THAT WAY HE WON'T BE TRACED HERE.
BUT WE STILL HAVE TO GET RID OF GORD-SON'S DAUGHTER --SHE'S IN ON WAYNE-SON'S SCHEME!
LEAVE HER TO ME. MY LAUGHING MAN WILL DEAL WITH HER...
And compute.
They have slumbered since before the Time of Smoke and Soot.
Waiting.
Now their long wait is over.

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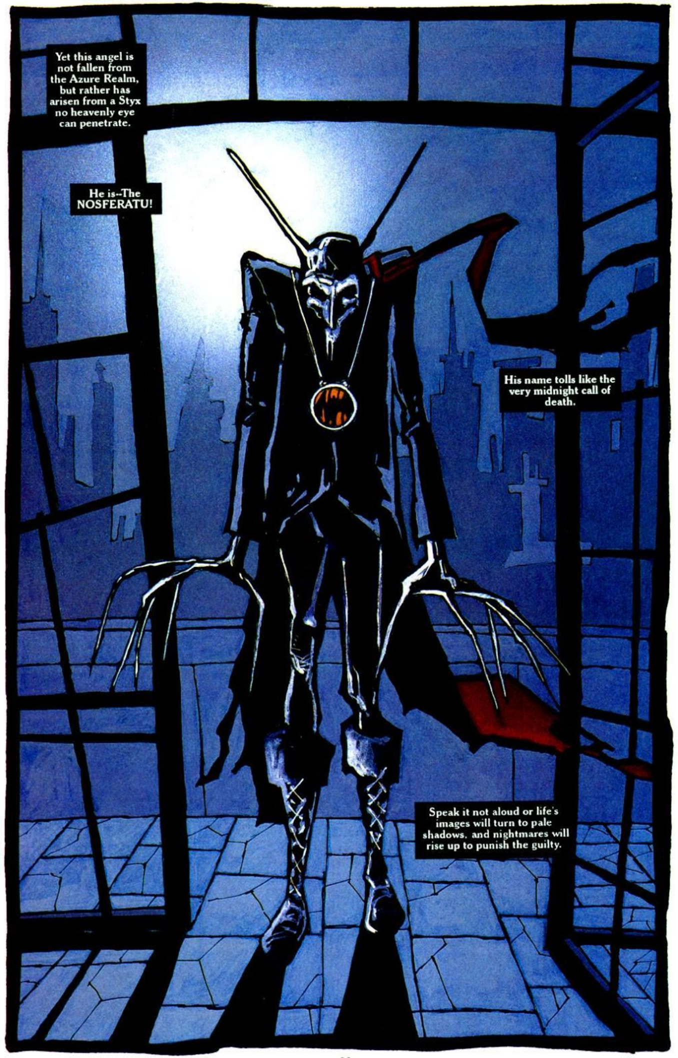
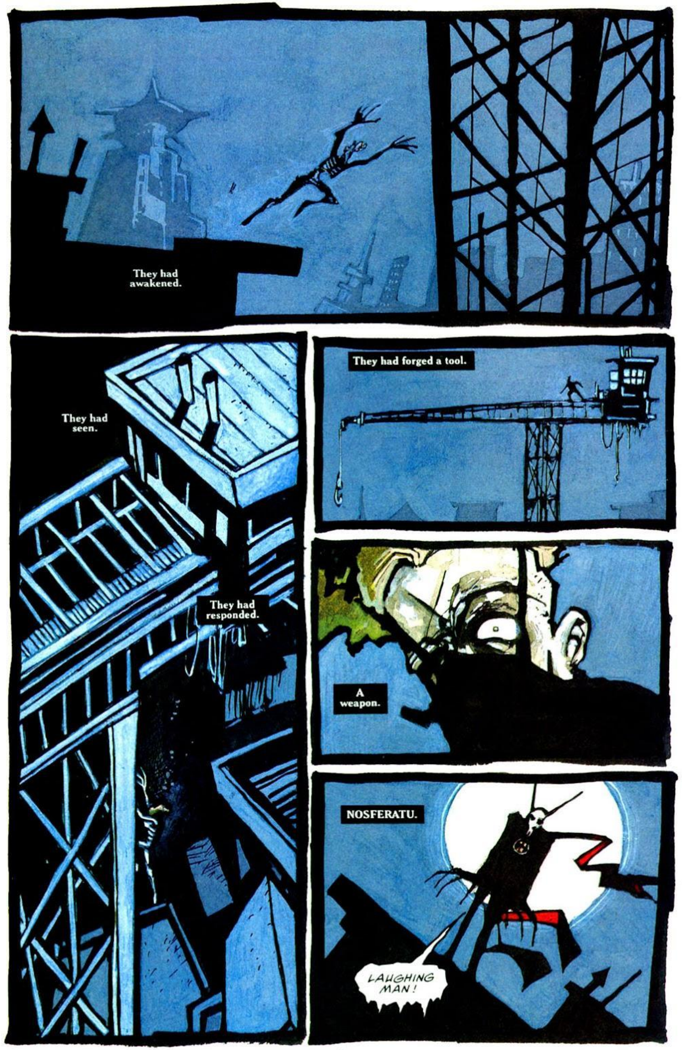

Yet this angel is not fallen from the Azure Realm, but rather has arisen from a Styx no heavenly eye can penetrate.
He is--The NOSFERATU!
His name tolls like the very midnight call of death.
Speak it not aloud or life's images will turn to pale shadows, and nightmares will rise up to punish the guilty.

The LAUGHING MAN's eyes, deep and cold, cut and thrust like a sword.
BARBARA's eyes, of mingled metal and agate, tingle with electric fear.
The NOSFERATU's eyes, feral and vengeful, exude hatred without end.

COME, LAUGHING MAN! **SHEATHE** YOUR CLAWS IN MY HEART!
I SHALL **BEAT** YOU WITHOUT RAGE OR HATE--
--AS A SMITH **STRIKES** HIS FORGE.
SLASH!
He has been sent by **THOSE WHO LIVE BELOW** to stem the madness above.

SREEK
SNIK
SNACT
VENGEANCE SHALL GIVE STRENGTH TO MY HAND...
I SHALL MAKE YOUR LAUGHTER **TEARS**...
YOU SHALL **WEEP** FOR MY MERCY!
KRAASHH
"I AM THE **AVENGER** OF THOSE WHO'VE LOST THE POWER TO LAUGH **FOREVER**!"

The madness had seeped from the Cabinet of Doktor Arkham and infected the body of Metropolis.
But the City was not without its defenses.
Deep below it were the soulless watchers whose ancient duty it had once been to guard it against evil.



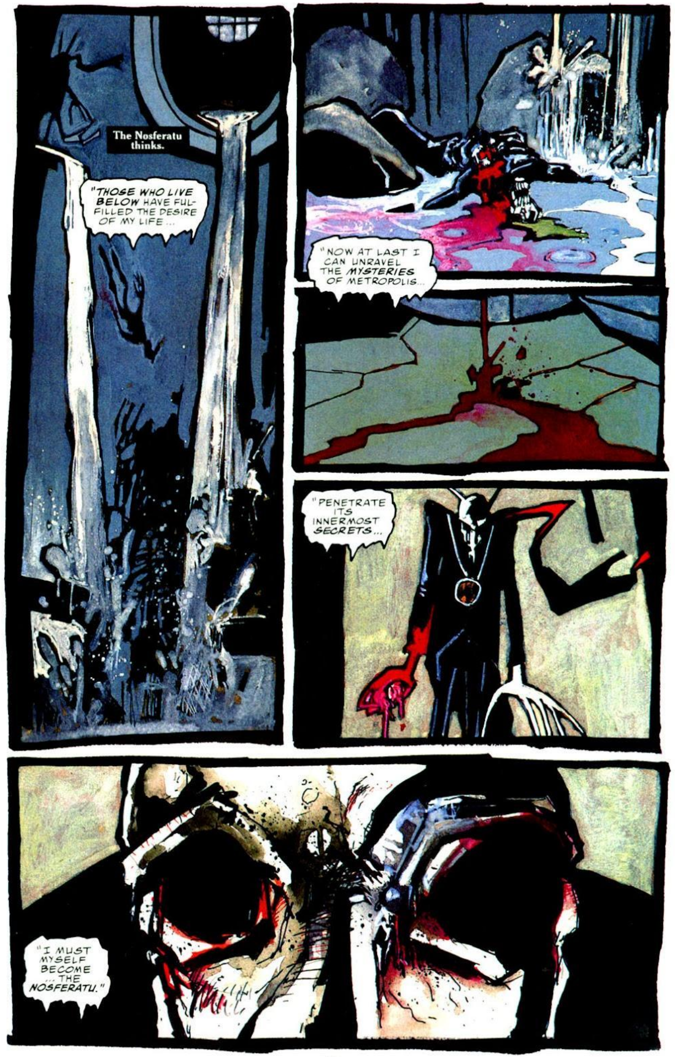
They had awakened.
They had seen.
They had responded.
They had forged a tool.
A weapon.
NOSFERATU.
LAUGHING MAN!

IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO ATONE FOR YOUR SINS!
In the dark.
KRASH!
Below.

hck hrrrk...
LAUGHING MAN--
--I SHALL BUILD FOR YOU AN ALTAR OF PAIN!
HAHARRr!
I SHALL GOUGE YOUR EYES...

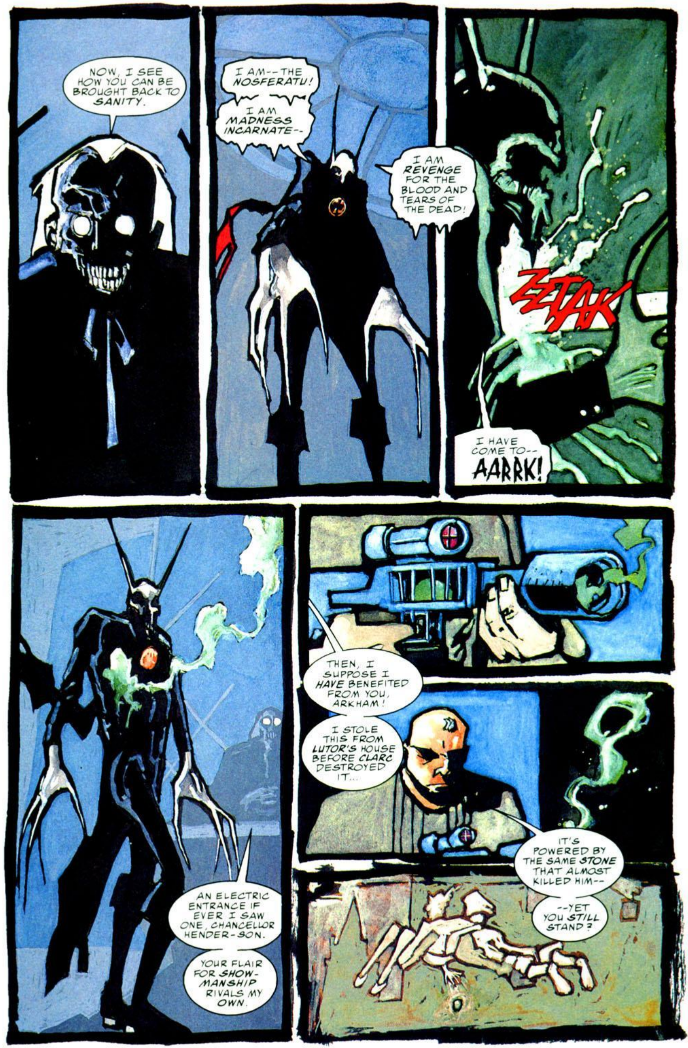
...AND REND YOUR LIMBS!
SSLASSH!
AIIEEEEEeee
--AND FINALLY--
--FINALLY--

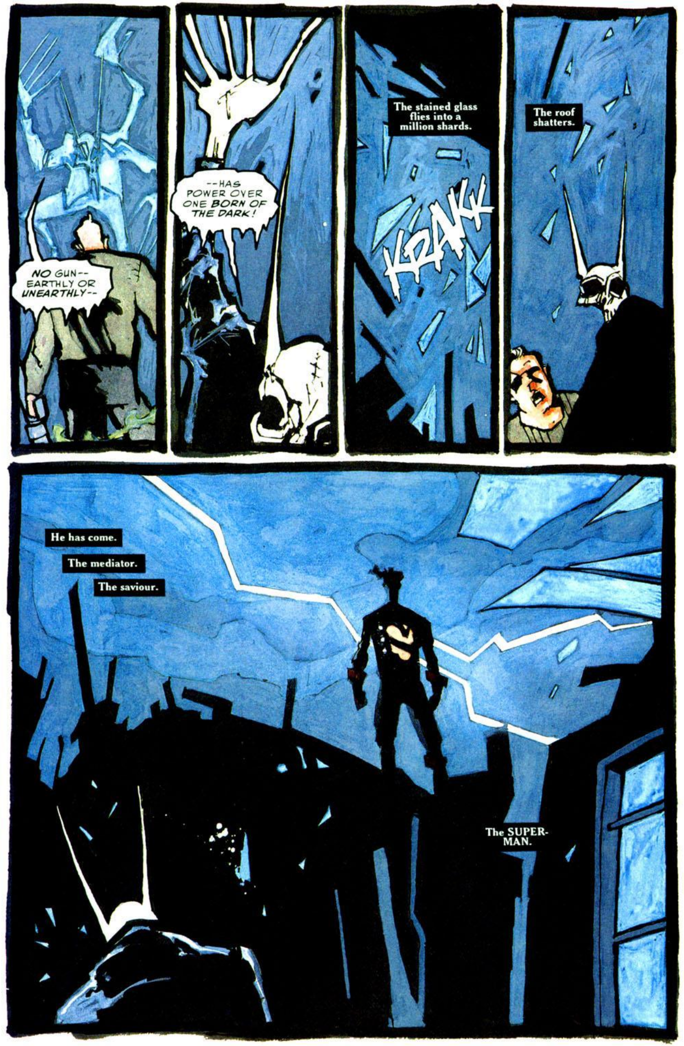
--I'LL AIM AT THE PURE CENTER OF YOUR EVIL FRAME--
WHOOSH!
--AND PLUNGE MY FINGERS--
ARGKK
--INTO YOUR BEATING HEART--
"--YOUR BLEEDING, SUFFERING, PALPITATING HEART!"
krkk


The Nosferatu thinks.
"THOSE WHO LIVE BELOW HAVE FULFILLED THE DESIRE OF MY LIFE...
"NOW AT LAST I CAN UNRAVEL THE MYSTERIES OF METROPOLIS...
"PENETRATE ITS INNERMOST SECRETS...
"I MUST MYSELF BECOME ... THE NOSFERATU."

THE MASTER IS COMING!
THE MASTER IS COMING!
THE MASTER IS COMING!
THE MASTER IS HERE!
THE MASTER IS HERE!
SHUT UP, YOU LUNATICS!
LOOKIT HERE! ONE OF 'EM'S GOT OUT!
OWW!
YAAA!
AIEEE!

THEY ALL BELIEVE WE ARE MAD--
--BUT IT IS THE DIRECTOR WHO IS MAD!
ARKHAM!
AT LAST, I UNDERSTAND THE NATURE OF YOUR MADNESS--
--DOKTOR WAYNE-SON!


NOW, I SEE HOW YOU CAN BE BROUGHT BACK TO SANITY.
I AM--THE NOSFERATU!
I AM MADNESS INCARNATE--
I AM REVENGE FOR THE BLOOD AND TEARS OF THE DEAD!
ZZTAK
I HAVE COME TO--AARRK!
AN ELECTRIC ENTRANCE IF EVER I SAW ONE, CHANCELLOR HENDER-SON.
YOUR FLAIR FOR SHOW-MANSHIP RIVALS MY OWN.
THEN, I SUPPOSE I HAVE BENEFITED FROM YOU, ARKHAM!
I STOLE THIS FROM LUTOR'S HOUSE BEFORE CLARC DESTROYED IT...
IT'S POWERED BY THE SAME STONE THAT ALMOST KILLED HIM--
--YET YOU STILL STAND?


NO GUN-- EARTHLY OR UNEARTHLY--
--HAS POWER OVER ONE BORN OF THE DARK!
The stained glass flies into a million shards.
KRAKK
The roof shatters.
He has come.
The mediator.
The saviour.
The SUPER-MAN.

I TOLD WAYNE-SON I WOULD INVESTI-GATE. I SEE THAT HE WAS RIGHT, CHANCELLOR.
YOU AND THE DOKTOR WERE WRONG TO THINK THAT ANYTHING COULD HAPPEN IN MY CITY WITHOUT MY DIS-COVERING IT.
I'M HANDING YOU OVER TO THE JUS-TICE LORDS SO THAT JUSTICE WILL BE SERVED.
YOUR JUSTICE, NOT MINE.
THE LAW IS THE LAW.
VENGEANCE IS THE ONLY TRUE LAW.
THESE MEN ARE SICK--
--THEY MUST BE TREATED.
NO! I WON'T BE LOCKED AWAY WITH MADMEN!
DIE, SUPER-MAN!

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YOUR LIGHT CANNOT EXIST WITHOUT MY DARKNESS.
THESE ARE MY PEOPLE. MY RESPONSIBILITY.
YOU DON'T HAVE THE POWER TO OPPOSE ME. I ALONE RULE METROPOLIS--
--I AM THE SUPER-MAN.
YOU DO NOT RULE HERE.

WHAMM
It has always been thus...
YOU'RE WRONG.
MY PERFECT METROPOLIS WILL NOT HARBOR--
...in the conflict between LIGHT and DARKNESS...
SLAMM
YOU ARE A DREAMER.
...ORDER and CHAOS.

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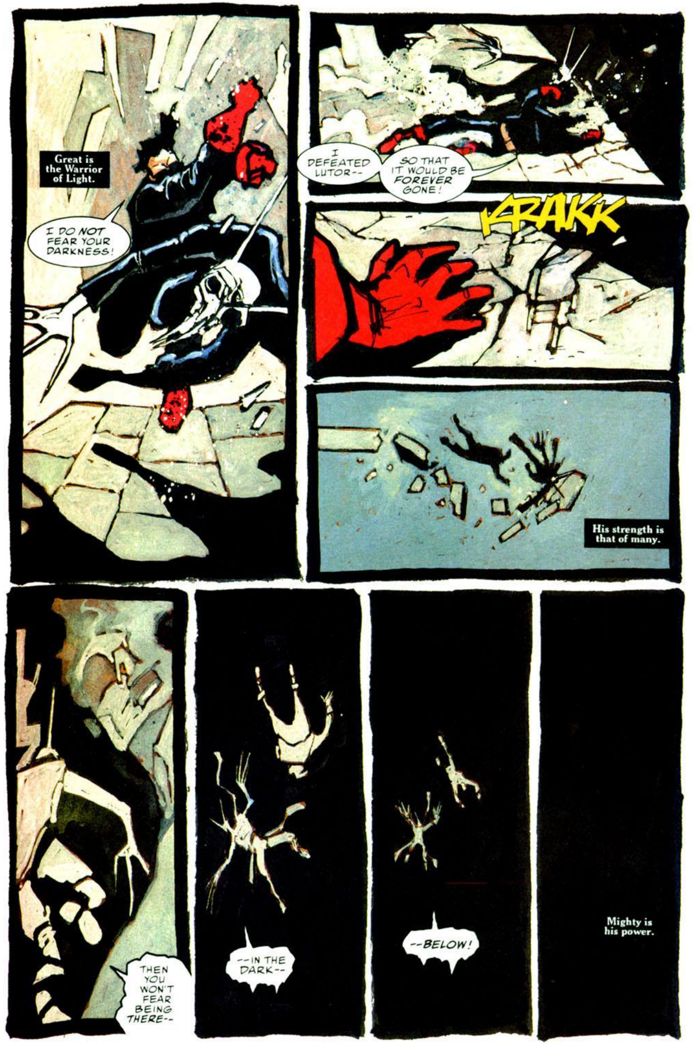
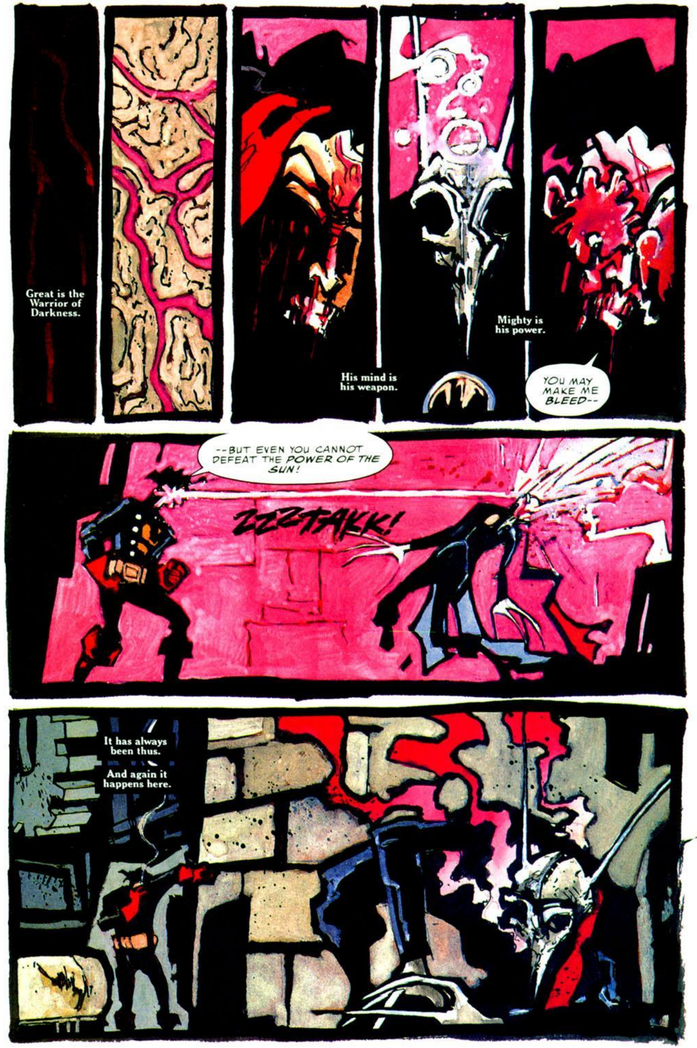
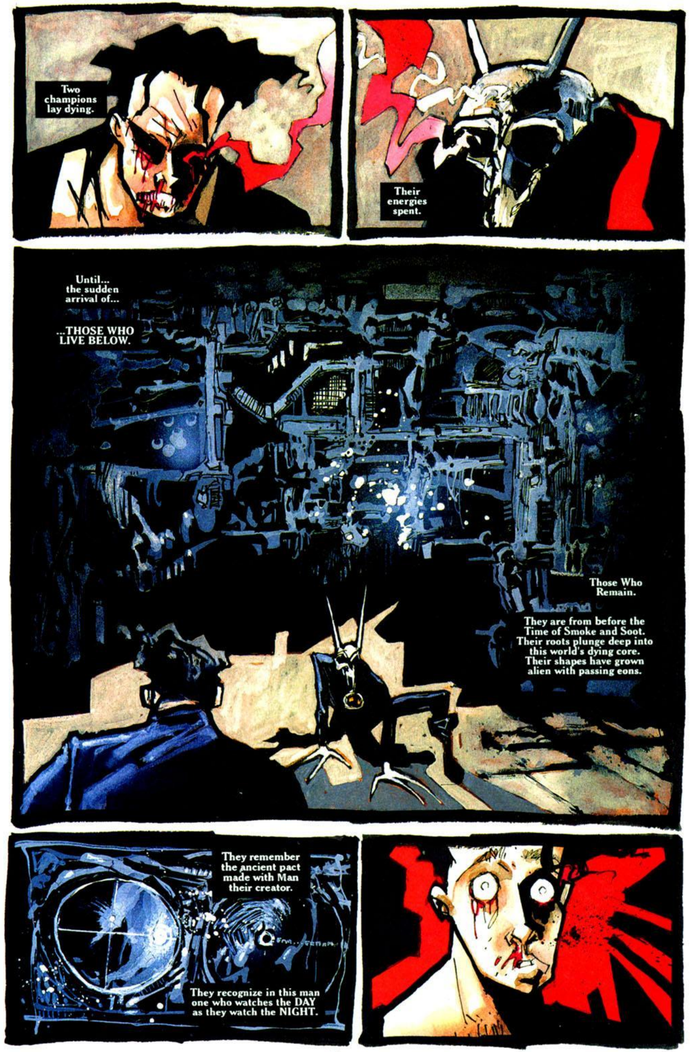
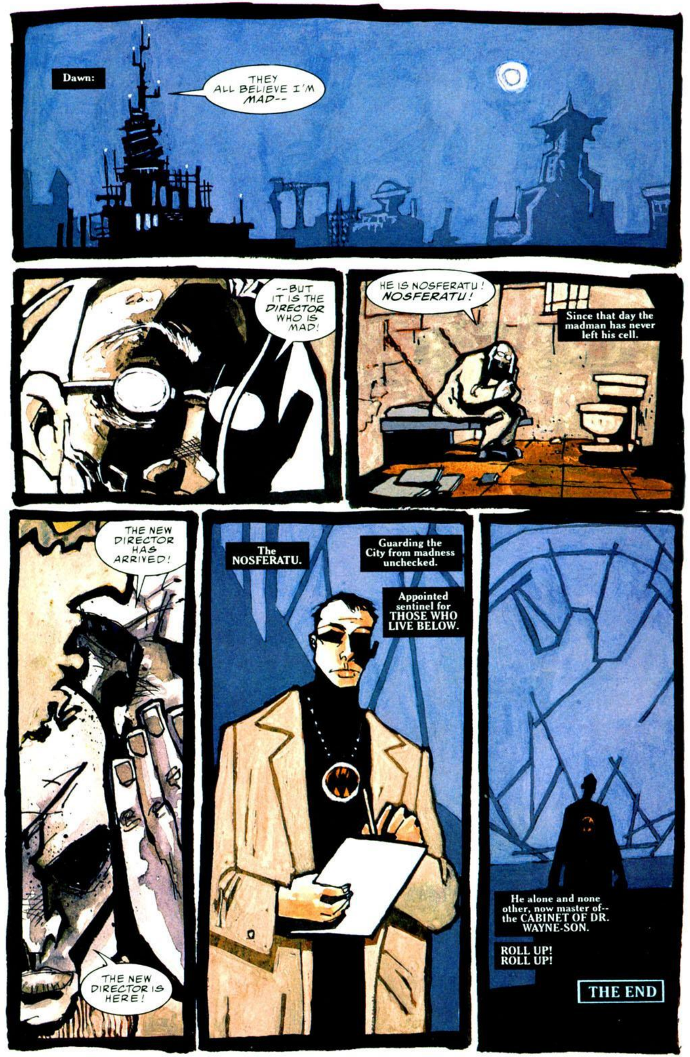
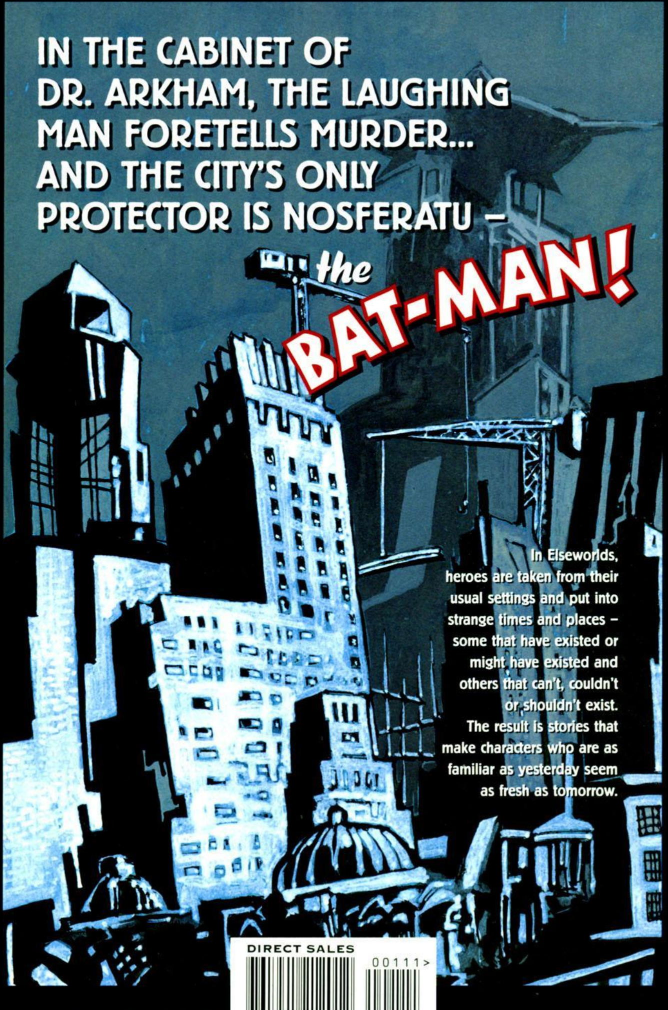



Great is the Warrior of Darkness.
His mind is his weapon.
Mighty is his power.
YOU MAY MAKE ME BLEED--
--BUT EVEN YOU CANNOT DEFEAT THE POWER OF THE SUN!
ZZZTAKK!
It has always been thus.
And again it happens here.


Two champions lay dying.
Their energies spent.
Until... the sudden arrival of...
...THOSE WHO LIVE BELOW.
Those Who Remain.
They are from before the Time of Smoke and Soot. Their roots plunge deep into this world's dying core. Their shapes have grown alien with passing eons.
They remember the ancient pact made with Man their creator.
They recognize in this man one who watches the DAY as they watch the NIGHT.

They "speak."
They acknowledge themselves, grudgingly, as two sides of the SAME coin.
The Darkness DEFINES the Light. One CANNOT survive WITHOUT the other.
A TRUCE is brokered.
WAIT! THERE'S MORE I WANT TO KNOW...
THEY'RE GONE.
YOUR MOVE.
HMM...
I ACCEPT THE DARKNESS IS YOURS.
I WILL NOT INTERFERE WITH YOU.
BUT YOU ...AND THEY... ARE NOT WELCOME IN THE LIGHT.


Dawn:
THEY ALL BELIEVE I'M MAD--
--BUT IT IS THE DIRECTOR WHO IS MAD!
HE IS NOSFERATU! NOSFERATU!
Since that day the madman has never left his cell.
THE NEW DIRECTOR HAS ARRIVED!
THE NEW DIRECTOR IS HERE!
The NOSFERATU.
Guarding the City from madness unchecked.
Appointed sentinel for THOSE WHO LIVE BELOW.
He alone and none other, now master of-- the CABINET OF DR. WAYNE-SON.
ROLL UP! ROLL UP!
THE END



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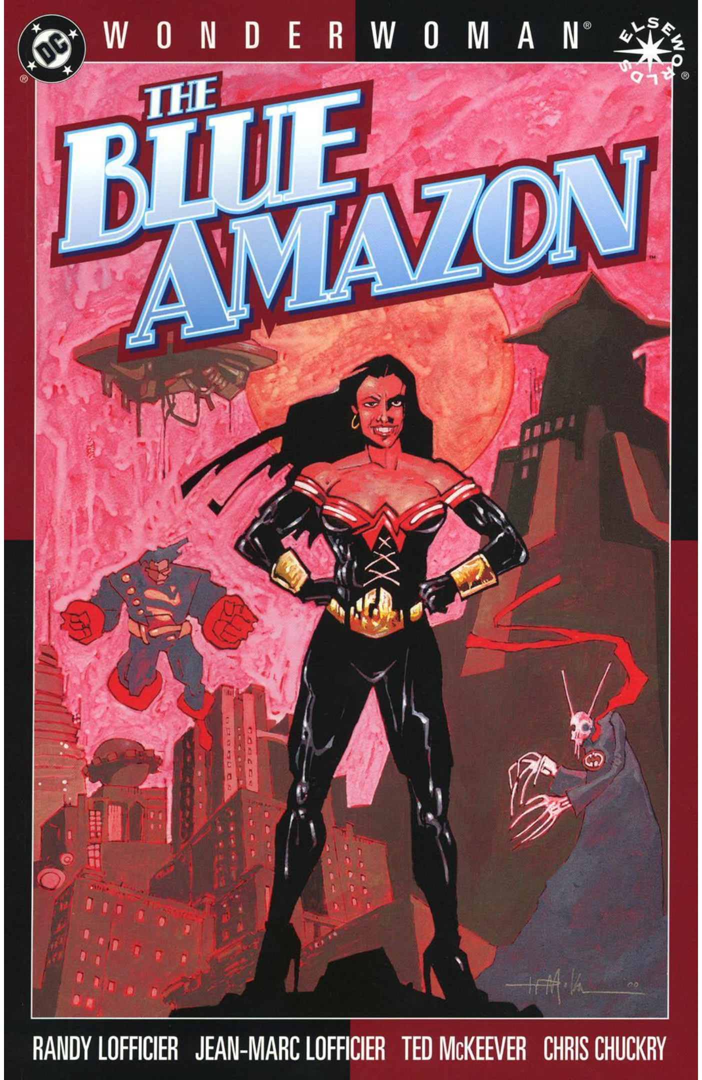
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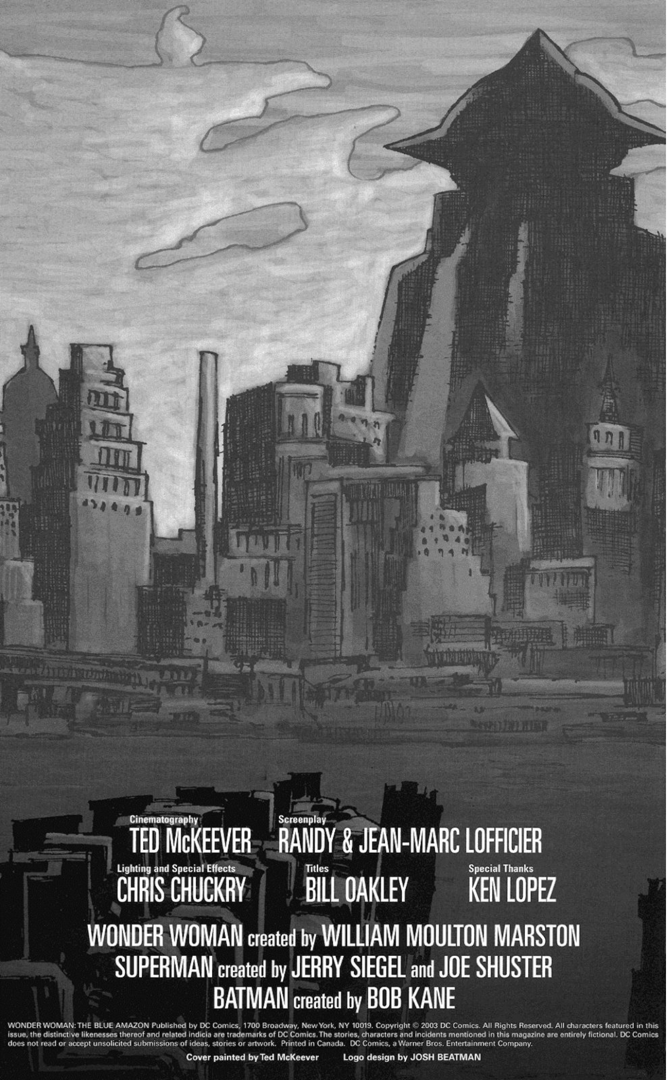

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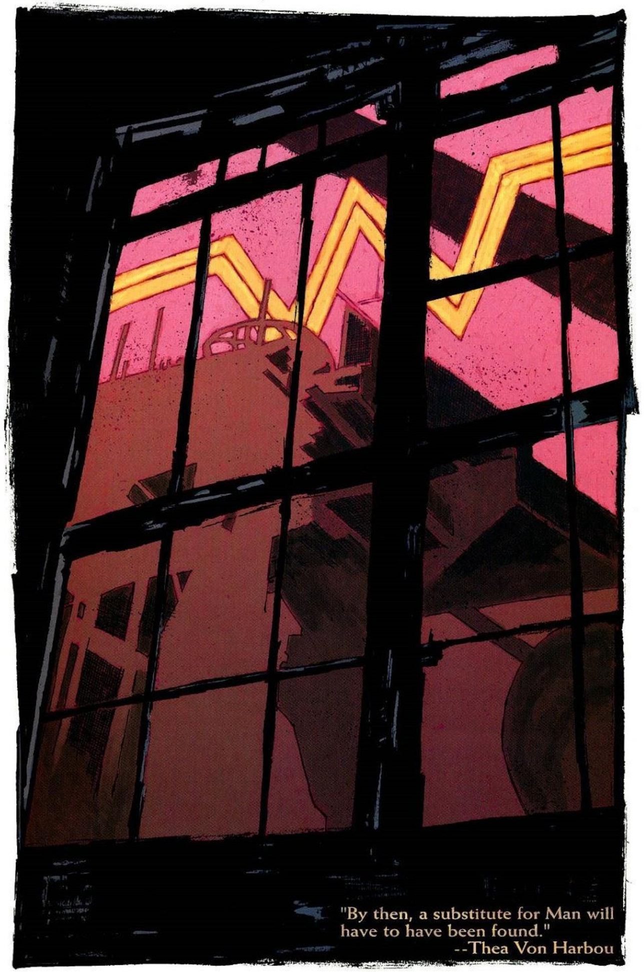

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Still, in the great TOWER OF BABEL, there were those who shifted through the dust of centuries past, seeking to read the mysteries hidden beneath.
One was LOIS, wife of the SUPER-MAN, whose faith and passion had delivered the City, and who was masterminding its rebirth.
Another was Architect TREVOR-SON, Master of Forms, Lord of Machines.
As new replaced old, they pored over the ancient texts, preserved by the great creator of Metropolis -- JON KENT.
THE CITY HAS ENDURED FOR A LONG TIME, AGELESS, UNCHANGING...
WHAT CLARC AND I WANT IS TO FIND WHAT CAME BEFORE.
NONE OF THESE RECORDS PREDATE THE FOUNDATION...
THEN WE MUST CONTINUE OUR SEARCH.

And then, METROPOLIS was at peace.
Under the benign rule of the SUPER-MAN, the City grew in light, beauty and harmony...
...While the NOSFERATU kept the Darkness ever in check.
And one more layer of the PAST came to be buried under the finely ground sands of an ever-glorious PRESENT.

THE TRUTH IS HERE, SOMEWHERE.
I *KNOW* IT.
AH! WHAT DO WE HAVE HERE?
THAT TUBE-- COULD IT BE?
THIS IS *JON KENT'S* OWN HANDWRITING!
LISTEN TO THIS:
IT SPEAKS OF THREE *SAVANTI* WHO CROSSED THE BLACK SEA, AFTER ENDURING THE *TIME OF SMOKE AND SOOT.*
THEY CAME TO BUILD METROPOLIS, THESE THREE-- *JON KENT* THE MASTER, AND *LUTOR* OF THE FLOWING RED HAIR...
... AND HERE, IT SPEAKS OF A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN, WITH EYES OF ICE, BUT THE TEXT HAS FADED...
SOME OF IT IS INDECIPHERABLE. WE'LL HAVE TO RE-STORE IT FIRST...
BUT IT'S GETTING *LATE...*
Ah, YES. YOUR MYSTERIOUS APPOINTMENT.
TWICE A WEEK. LIKE CLOCK-WORK.
WHAT COULD IT BE?
A *SECRET LOVER,* PERHAPS?

METROPOLIS IS MY *ONLY LOVE,* LOIS...
"MY GUIDING STAR...
"LIGHT THAT BRIGHTENS MY DAYS...
"YET THERE IS ANOTHER MISTRESS WHO RULES MY NIGHTS...
"THOUGH MY *MIND* MAY BELONG TO THE CITY...
"MY HEART IS SHACKLED TO *ANOTHER.*
"EVEN IN A WELL-TENDED GARDEN WEEDS STILL GROW..."
WANNA GOOD TIME, DOLL?

"AND PASSION ALL TOO OFTEN GROWS BEST FROM SIN."
Music hung in the air, hurled into the drunkenness of night by hidden loudspeakers.
Wanton, a shrieking gaiety, heated of rhythm...
Palace of Sin
...it shouted, "Welcome to Dr. Psykho's PALACE OF SIN!"
IF IT AIN'T OUR REGULAR "MR. SMITH"! HAR-HAR!
"MR. SMITH." A PLEASURE TO SEE YOU AGAIN.
I'LL TAKE YOU TO YOUR TABLE.

...AND THE OTHER CANNIBAL SAYS, "DOES THIS CLOWN TASTE FUNNY TO YOU?"
HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA
SO, THE FIRST CANNIBAL ASKS WHY IT TOOK SO LONG TO FIX DINNER...
THE OTHER SAYS, "HAVE YOU EVER TRIED TO CLEAN A CLOWN?"
HAHAHAHAHA
BUT WE ALL KNOW WHY YOU'RE HERE!
YOU CAME TO GET OUT OF THE COLD!
SO LET'S RAISE THE TEMPERATURE A LITTLE!
HAR HAR!
IT IS MY WICKED PLEASURE TO INTRODUCE...
...THE ONNNNE, THE ONNNNLY DIANAAA--

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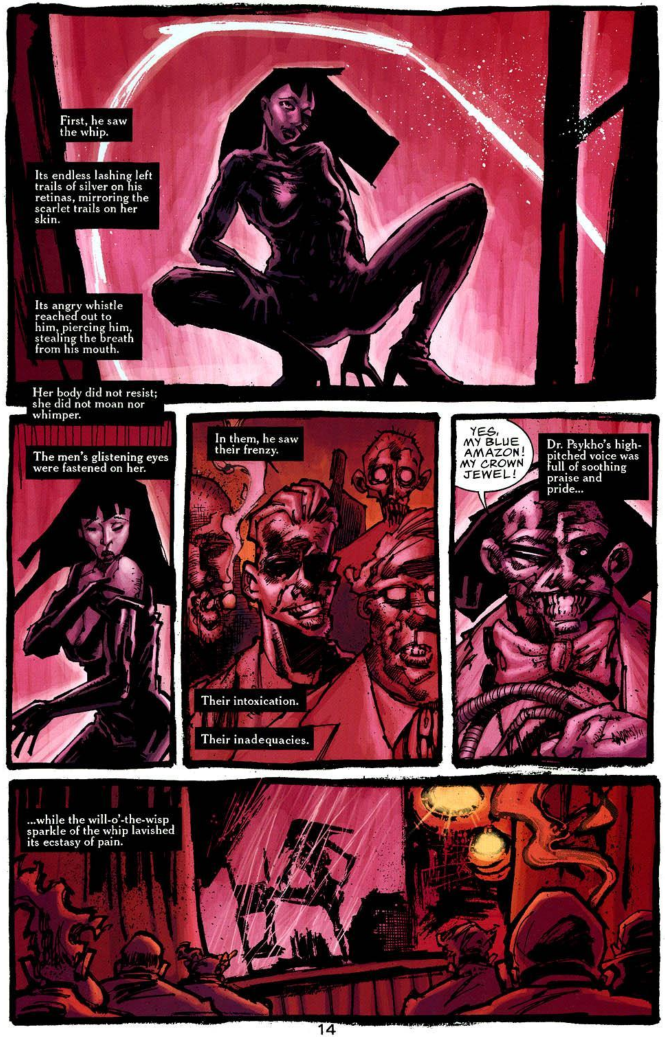
Trevor-son had hesitated a long time before opening the door.
For all his senses told him a weird existence went on behind it.
The rooms were dimly lit.
There was screaming and there was panting.
The warm, moist air was filled with intoxicating scents.
His own breath was forced to drink in the screaming and the panting...
...And it was suffocating.
Sweat dripped from his temples like soft, silent tears.
At last, Trevor-Son had seen the TRUE FACE of the Palace of Sin.
Insane. Intoxicating. Boundlessly blissful. Boundlessly destructive.
But Trevor-Son had not yet seen the WORST.

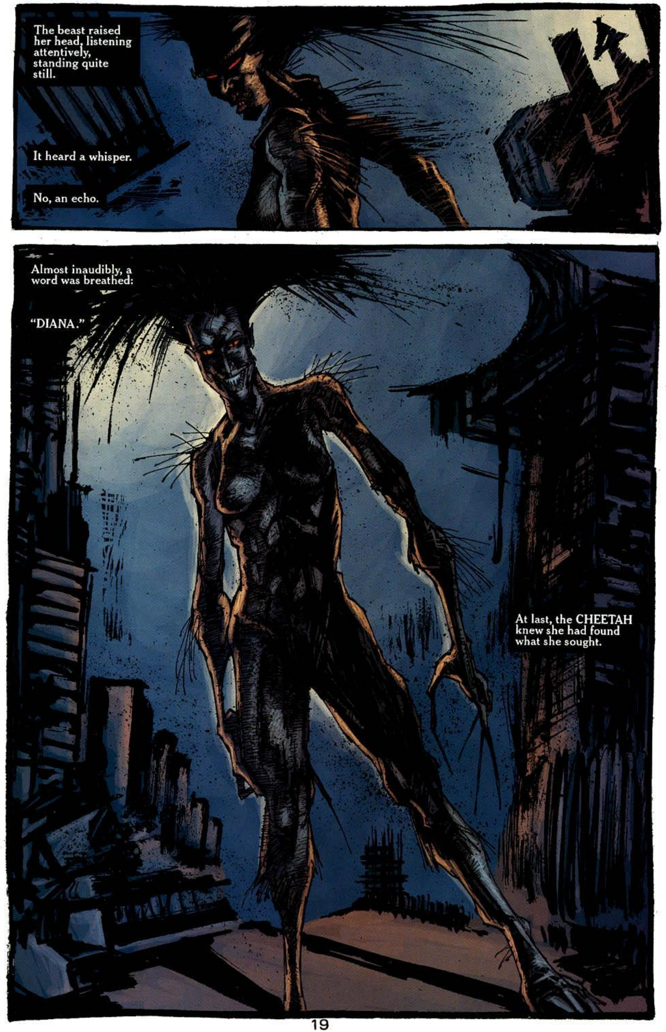

First, he saw the whip.
Its endless lashing left trails of silver on his retinas, mirroring the scarlet trails on her skin.
Its angry whistle reached out to him, piercing him, stealing the breath from his mouth.
Her body did not resist; she did not moan nor whimper.
The men's glistening eyes were fastened on her.
In them, he saw their frenzy.
Their intoxication.
Their inadequacies.
YES, MY BLUE AMAZON! MY CROWN JEWEL!
Dr. Psykho's high-pitched voice was full of soothing praise and pride...
...while the will-o'-the-wisp sparkle of the whip lavished its ecstasy of pain.

Elsewhere in the great city, the Visitor trembled from head to foot...
...hissing upwards, blazing with fury...
Still, it was not truly a trembling.
It was as if a ripple had run through her.
A quiver caused by the relaxation of all her muscles.
The wonderful sweetness of oblivion.
Then: a timid, caressing touch.
A gentle gesture.
WHO?
The conscious-ness of deliverance.
ME, STEVE TREVOR-SON!
WHAT THEY DO TO YOU--IT'S MONSTROUS!
COME WITH ME!

LEAN ON ME!
I'LL HELP YOU ESCAPE.
I'LL TAKE YOU TO SAFETY.
YOU ARE NOT HIS PLAY-THING!
NO HUMAN BEING SHOULD BE TREATED LIKE THAT.
I'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU.
DAMN THIS ENDLESS MAZE!
DON'T BE AFRAID...
...I KNOW THE SUPER-MAN.
WHEN HE HEARS OF THIS, HE'LL...
THEN WE MUST MAKE SURE NO WHISPER OF THIS EVER REACHES HIS OH-SO-FINE EARS, MUSTN'T WE, "MR. SMITH"?
WE CAN'T ALLOW THE MASTER OF METROPOLIS TO BE DISTURBED BY SCURRILOUS RUMORS.
NOT NOW, WHEN WE'RE ALL WALK-ING TOGETHER TOWARDS UTOPIA.

"BUT WHAT IS UTOPIA WITHOUT A LITTLE FUN ON THE SIDE, eh?
SLAAK
"THE WORKERS WEAR SILK AND DRINK WINE THESE DAYS.
"SOME OF THEM EVEN SAVE ENOUGH OF THEIR PENNIES TO PATRONIZE MY HUMBLE ESTABLISHMENT.
THUNK
"AT NIGHT, EVEN YOUR VAUNTED CITY OF MACHINES NEEDS A BREAK FROM THE FRENZY OF THE DAY'S WORK..."
WHY, MY PALACE OF SIN HAS ALMOST BECOME AN INSTI-TUTION!
AND YOU, MY DEAREST BLUE AMAZON...
...YOU ARE ITS MOST PRIZED POSSESSION!
WHO-- IS SHE? WHO?
I DON'T KNOW, ARCHITECT TREVOR-SON...
TRULY.
...BUT I CAN TELL YOU A STORY...

DID YOU EVER BE-LIEVE THAT FAIRY TALE ABOUT HOW THE FIRST HUMAN WAS A MAN?
I NEVER DID.
IF A MALE GOD CREATED THE WORLD, THEN HE CERTAINLY CREATED WOMAN FIRST...
LOVINGLY AND REVELING IN HER BEAUTY...
WOULDN'T YOU AGREE, ARCHITECT TREVOR-SON?
"WHEN LUTOR ENTRUSTED HER TO ME, COLD VAPOR STREAMED FROM HER STILL-GLAZED SKIN.
"SHE WAS VALUABLE BEYOND MEASURE, HE SAID, BUT DID NOT DIVULGE HER SECRET."
"PERHAPS HE HAD JUST CREATED HER, AS HE CREATED THE LAUGHING MAN OUT OF POOR ARKHAM'S FREAKS...
"OR MAYBE HE HAD JUST PLUCKED HER FROM THE VERY HEAVENS.
NOW LUTOR IS DEAD, KILLED BY THE SUPER-MAN.
VALUABLE BEYOND MEASURE... WHY?
SHE HAS SUCCESSFULLY RESISTED ALL OF MY ATTEMPTS AT MAKING HER TALK.
THAT, IN ITSELF, IS EXTRAOR-DINARY--
FOR NO ONE ELSE HAS EVER RESISTED MY HYPNOTIC POWERS...
WHY WON'T SHE BREAK? WHY?
IEEEEE



The beast raised her head, listening attentively, standing quite still.
It heard a whisper.
No, an echo.
Almost inaudibly, a word was breathed:
"DIANA."
At last, the CHEETAH knew she had found what she sought.

As the CHEETAH prepared to move, she smelled the men.
The Cheetah had never known fear.
In fact, she had never known men.
She knew only immediate wrath and fury in the face of aggression.
SLASH
She struck, smiling, almost not knowing she did it.
She felt like singing.

Her blood pounding, she felt the proximity of her prey...
She heard her voice from somewhere among the offal...
She repeated her name over to herself...
"DIANA."
But no one else heard it.
No one else - - HUMAN.

THE NOSFERATU heard it.
Appointed sentinel for THOSE WHO LIVE BELOW, the ancient machines which still lived beneath the City.
The NOSFERATU saw a stranger. Someone NOT from the City.
The CHEETAH saw another foe, another prey.
She heard the roar of blood dashing through her brain.
And high above it all, a voice in her mind that said, "I AM HERE.

"I AM HERE!"
OF COURSE YOU ARE HERE, MY ANGEL-- WITH YOUR FRIEND, DR. PSYKHO...
AND I AM YOUR FRIEND, NO? AND FRIENDS HAVE NO SECRETS FROM EACH OTHER...
SO YOU CAN TELL ME-- WHO ARE YOU? *WHAT* ARE YOU?
DONNERWETTER! THAT WOMAN WILL DRIVE ME INSANE!
SOMEWHERE IN THAT IMPENETRABLE SKULL OF HERS IS A *SECRET* THAT EVEN *HE* FEARED...
I KNOW BECAUSE *HE* TOLD ME SO HIMSELF...

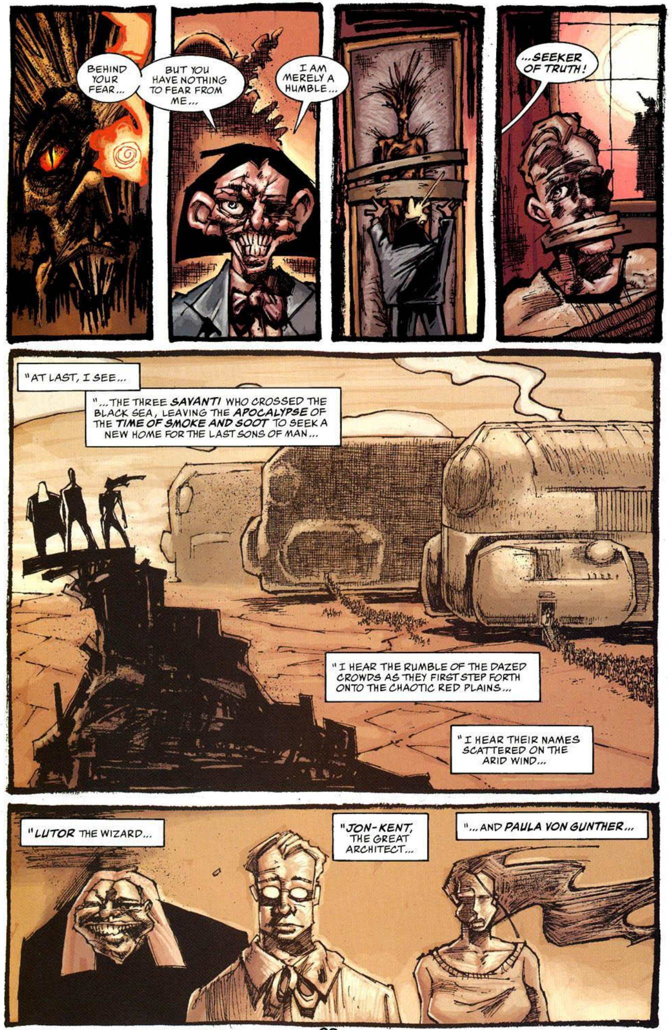
Journal
EVEN GREAT *LUTOR* HIMSELF WAS AFRAID OF MY BLUE AMAZON!
THAT DIARY... CAN IT BE?...
YES! IT WAS LUTOR'S!
IF ONLY I COULD UNLOCK ITS SECRETS...
YOU MUST LET US STUDY IT. WE COULD LEARN *SO MUCH* ABOUT METROPOLIS...
ITS ORIGINS... *THE TIME OF SMOKE AND SOOT...*
BAH! HISTORY BELONGS TO THOSE WHO MAKE IT, YOUNG TREVOR-SON...
NOT THOSE WHO *RECORD* IT.
BUT YOU WILL BE *USE-FUL* TO ME, FEAR NOT...
MAYBE I HAVE BEEN APPLYING THE *WRONG* KIND OF *PRESSURE*...
MAYBE *DIANA* WOULD PREFER TO *WATCH* FOR A CHANGE?
THINK OF THE PAIN. THE EXQUISITE PAIN.

"I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE THE LOOK IN HER EYES...
SKRASH!
"...AS SHE SEES YOUR LIFE...
"...DRAIN AWAY.
"I WONDER, WILL SHE RETREAT IN INSANITY...
"...YIELD TO HER INNER DEMONS, WHATEVER THOSE MAY BE..."

...OR MORE LIKELY, YOUNG TREVOR-SON, WILL MY BLUE AMAZON FINALLY--
K-KRASH!
--BREAK?!
DIANA.
CHEETAH.

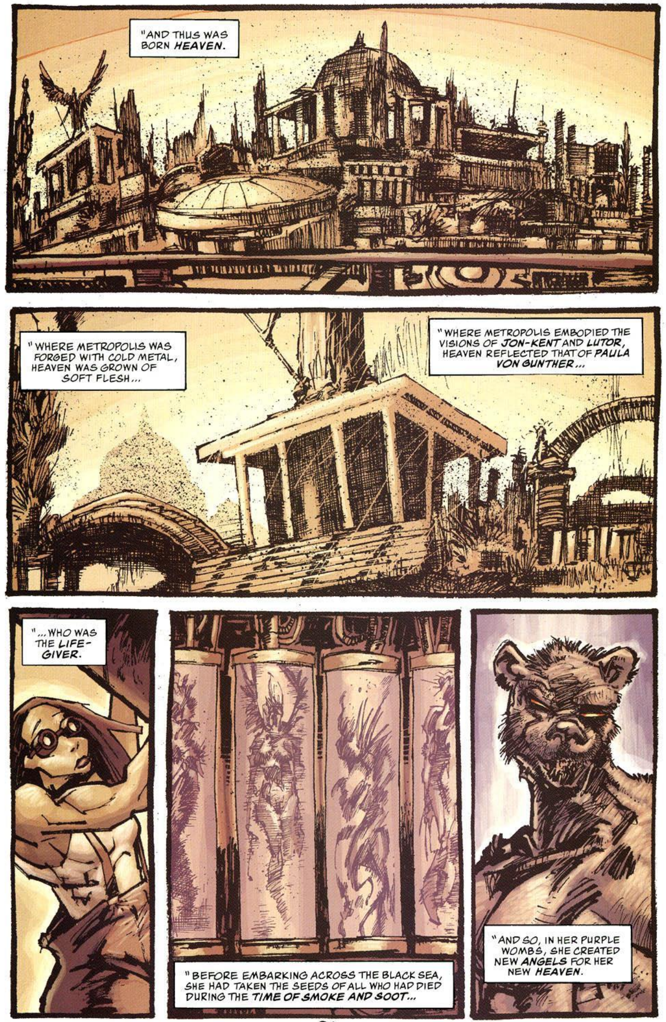
YOU HAVE COME.
HEAVEN NEEDS YOU, MY SISTER.
STOP HER!
GROWLLLL
HALT!
I SAID-- HALT!
GROW--
AN OPEN MIND-- I LIKE THAT!

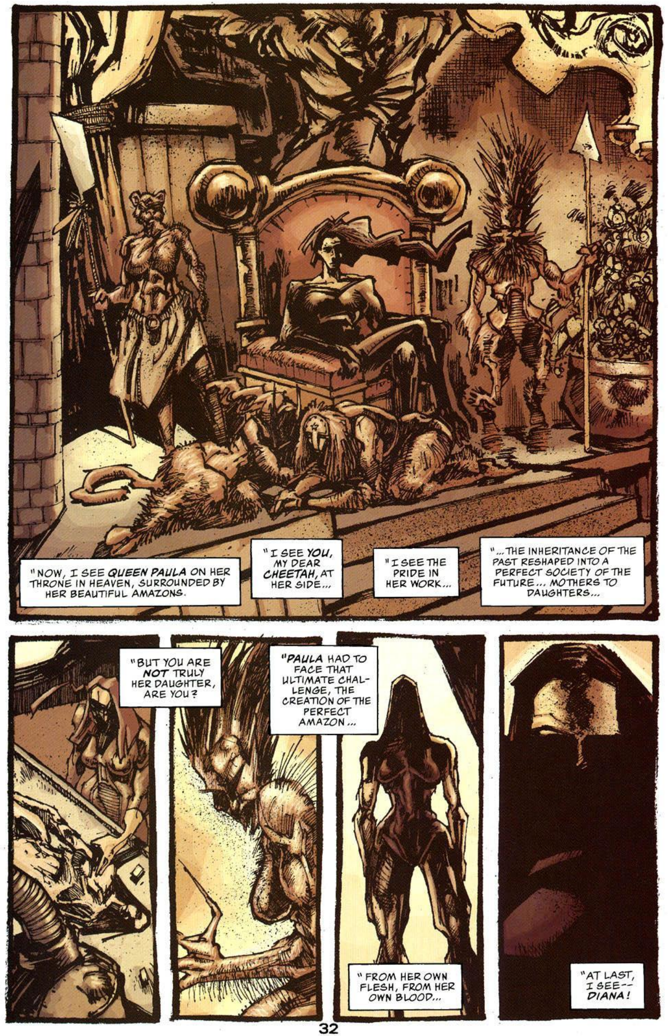
WHAT HAVE WE HERE? SECRETS...
...OLD SECRETS...
Later, as another pallid sun rose over the Tower of Babel...
TREVOR-SON? DISAPPEARED?
YOU MUST FIND HIM, CLARC!
YES, BUT NO ONE IN THE UNDERWORLD EVER SEEMS TO SEE...
"...OR HEAR ANYTHING."
GR-AIIEEE!
UNBURDEN YOURSELF, MY DEAR...
I SEE BEHIND YOUR RAGE...



BEHIND YOUR FEAR...
BUT YOU HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR FROM ME...
I AM MERELY A HUMBLE...
...SEEKER OF TRUTH!
"AT LAST, I SEE...
"...THE THREE SAVANTI WHO CROSSED THE BLACK SEA, LEAVING THE APOCALYPSE OF THE TIME OF SMOKE AND SOOT TO SEEK A NEW HOME FOR THE LAST SONS OF MAN...
"I HEAR THE RUMBLE OF THE DAZED CROWDS AS THEY FIRST STEP FORTH ONTO THE CHAOTIC RED PLAINS...
"I HEAR THEIR NAMES SCATTERED ON THE ARID WIND...
"LUTOR THE WIZARD...
"JON-KENT, THE GREAT ARCHITECT...
"...AND PAULA VON GUNTHER...

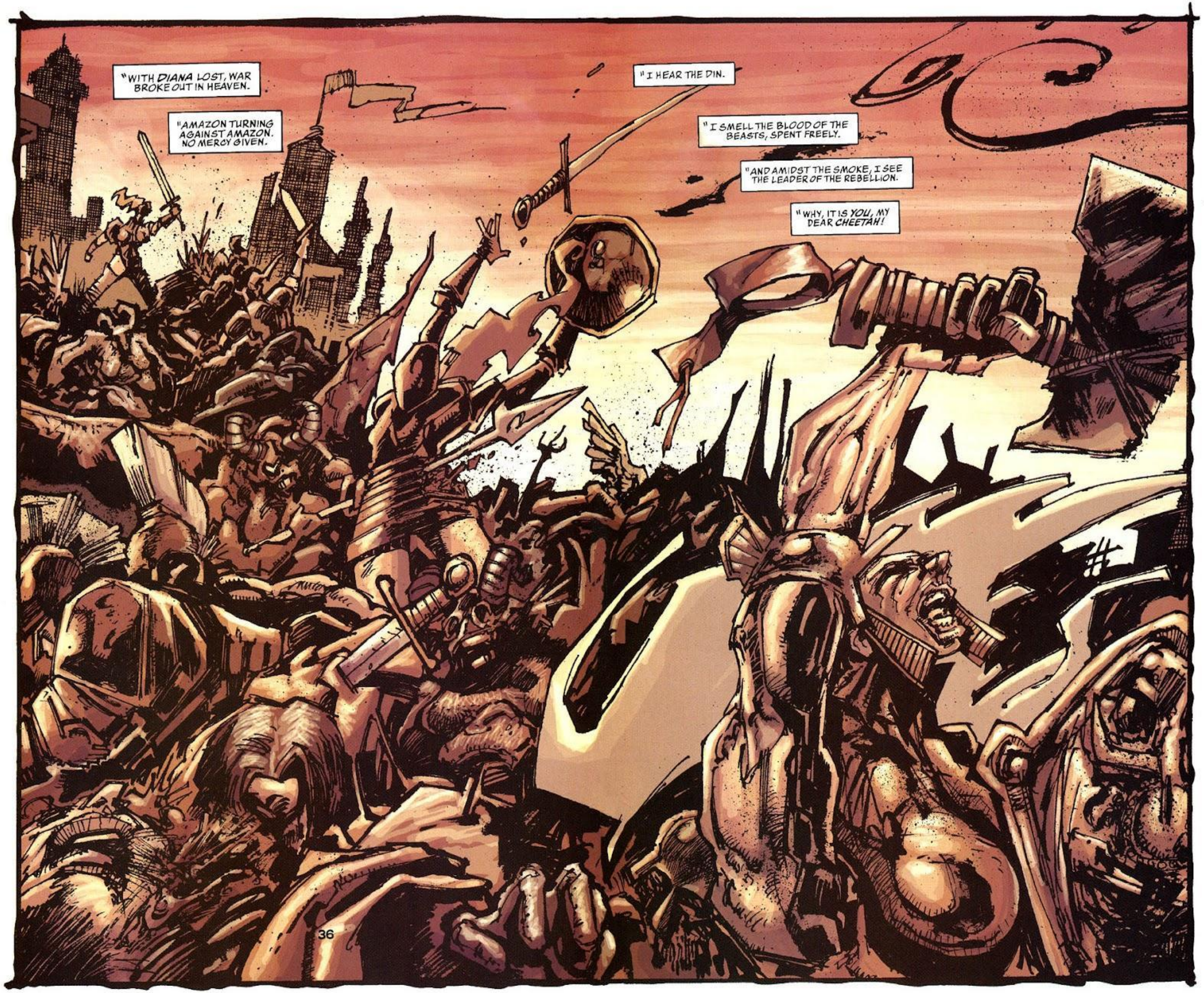
"...THE LIFE-GIVER.
"I HEAR THE THREE PLAN AS THEY EMBARKED ON THE BUILDING OF A GREAT CITY...
"A CITY LIKE NONE THAT EVER WAS BEFORE...
"THE BRAINCHILD OF JON-KENT...
"...MADE POSSIBLE BY LUTOR'S SCIENCE.
KENT
"AS NEW FORMS WERE CREATED, OLD MEMORIES WERE ERASED, MINDS WERE RESHAPED...
"THE PAST BECAME THE PRESENT, AND THE FUTURE SIMPLY CEASED TO EXIST.
"ONLY METROPOLIS WAS, FOREVERMORE.
"NOW, I HEAR PAULA QUARRELING WITH LUTOR...
"SHE NO LONGER TRUSTED HIM.
"SHE NO LONGER BELIEVED THAT METROPOLIS WAS THE ANSWER.
"FINALLY, SHE LEFT, TO CREATE HER OWN ANSWER...
"HER OWN CITY...


"AND THUS WAS BORN *HEAVEN*.
"WHERE METROPOLIS WAS FORGED WITH COLD METAL, HEAVEN WAS GROWN OF SOFT FLESH...
"WHERE METROPOLIS EMBODIED THE VISIONS OF *JON-KENT* AND *LUTOR*, HEAVEN REFLECTED THAT OF *PAULA VON GUNTHER*...
"...WHO WAS THE *LIFE-GIVER*.
"BEFORE EMBARKING ACROSS THE BLACK SEA, SHE HAD TAKEN THE SEEDS OF ALL WHO HAD DIED DURING THE *TIME OF SMOKE AND SOOT*...
"AND SO, IN HER PURPLE WOMBS, SHE CREATED NEW *ANGELS* FOR HER NEW *HEAVEN*.


"NOW, I SEE *QUEEN PAULA* ON HER THRONE IN HEAVEN, SURROUNDED BY HER BEAUTIFUL AMAZONS.
"I SEE *YOU*, MY DEAR *CHEETAH*, AT HER SIDE...
"I SEE THE PRIDE IN HER WORK...
"...THE INHERITANCE OF THE PAST RESHAPED INTO A PERFECT SOCIETY OF THE FUTURE... MOTHERS TO DAUGHTERS...
"BUT YOU ARE *NOT* TRULY HER DAUGHTER, ARE YOU?
"*PAULA* HAD TO FACE THAT ULTIMATE CHAL-LENGE, THE CREATION OF THE PERFECT AMAZON...
"FROM HER OWN FLESH, FROM HER OWN BLOOD...
"AT LAST, I SEE-- *DIANA*!

"BELOW, WHILE METROPOLIS STILL ENDURED...
"...I HEAR JON-KENT QUARREL WITH LUTOR OVER A WOMAN NAMED MARTA.
"I HEAR HER SCREAMS AS SHE DIES AT LUTOR'S HANDS.
"I SEE LUTOR WEAVE HIS SPELL OVER JON-KENT.
"THUS WAS PARADISE LOST AGAIN.
"THE CITY WENT ON, SECRETLY RULED FROM THE CROOKED HOUSE.
"PAULA VON GUNTHER WAS FORGOTTEN, HER NAME ERASED FROM THE ARCHIVES.
"UNTIL ONE DAY...

"PAULA HAD SENT HER OWN DAUGHTER DOWN FROM HEAVEN TO METROPOLIS BELOW.
"HOW TOUCHING!
"HER AMAZONS WERE SUFFERING FROM GENETIC FRAGMENTATION.
"THEY BEHAVED ERRATICALLY.
"HEAVEN WAS THREATENED BY STRIFE.
"THE ANSWER WAS OBVIOUS: REPLENISH THE GENETIC POOL WITH MEN'S SEED.
"REOPEN COMMUNICATION BETWEEN HEAVEN AND METROPOLIS.



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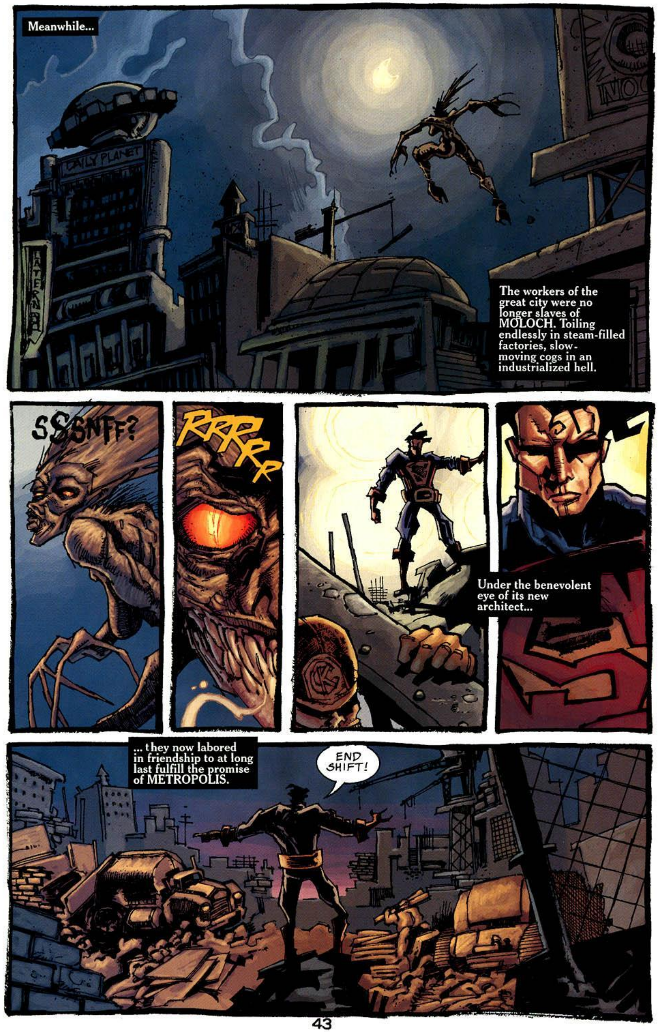
"WHY DID YOU KILL HER, CHEETAH? THE ONE WHO HAD GIVEN YOU LIFE?
"WHY DID SHE HAVE TO DIE? WAS IT YOUR BEAST-BORN NATURE?
"DID SHE NOT LOVE YOU ENOUGH? OR DID YOU MERELY WISH TO BECOME THE NEW MISTRESS OF HEAVEN?
"WHEN YOU TRIED USING PAULA'S PURPLE RAY TO CREATE NEW AMAZONS, YOU DISCOVERED THAT IT WAS KEYED TO HER GENETIC CODE.
"THE OTHERS BEGAN TO GRUMBLE, SHOW THEIR DISCONTENT.
"YOU NEEDED DIANA.
"THAT IS WHAT CAUSED YOU TO DESCEND FROM YOUR LOFTY THRONE.

"WE HAVE MUCH IN COMMON, YOU AND I."
LIKE MY LATE AND LAMENTED MASTER, I WANT TO RULE THIS WRETCHED CITY, AS YOU WANT TO RULE HEAVEN...
"BUT THERE IS ONE WHO STANDS IN MY WAY--WHO WILL WANT TO CONQUER, NAY, DESTROY HEAVEN IF HE LEARNS OF ITS EXISTENCE..."
KILL THE SUPER-MAN FOR ME, AND I'LL GIVE YOU DIANA!
I'M GLAD SHE'S GONE. GAVE ME TH' CREEPS.
WHAT ABOUT TREVOR-SON, MASTER?
NOW THAT I HAVE REACHED A SATISFACTORY UNDERSTANDING WITH OUR GUEST...

"...HIS PRESENCE IS NO LONGER REQUIRED."
AS TO OUR BLUE AMAZON, MY NEW ASSOCIATE NEEDS ONLY HER LIVING FLESH...
...NOT HER MIND.
"A LIVING, DOCILE PUPPET WILL BE MY GIFT TO THE NEW QUEEN OF HEAVEN!"

BACK, YOU MONSTROSITY! YOU WILL NOT HARM HER WHILE I LIVE!
JUST KILL HIM, IMBECILES! I'M ENGAGED IN A VERY DELICATE OPERATION HERE!
REMOVING HER MEMORIES WITHOUT DIS-ABLING HER COGNITIVE FUNC-TIONS IS LIKE REPAIRING A FINE WATCH!
AIEEEE
She has beheld the murderer of her mother. She has heard the tale of her demise.
She is looking at the imminent death of the one man she loves.
Ancient genetic imperatives flood her mind, restoring memories, bursting through the dams once erected by LUTOR...
Suddenly, DIANA lives anew...in a new body restored to its full powers.

No mortal-forged chains can bind her now.
She is again the embodiment of Heaven. The perfect Amazon.
THE WONDER-WOMAN.
uh oh.


Meanwhile...
DAILY PLANET
The workers of the great city were no longer slaves of MOLOCH. Toiling endlessly in steam-filled factories, slow-moving cogs in an industrialized hell.
SSSNFF?
RRRRR
Under the benevolent eye of its new architect...
... they now labored in friendship to at long last fulfill the promise of METROPOLIS.
END SHIFT!

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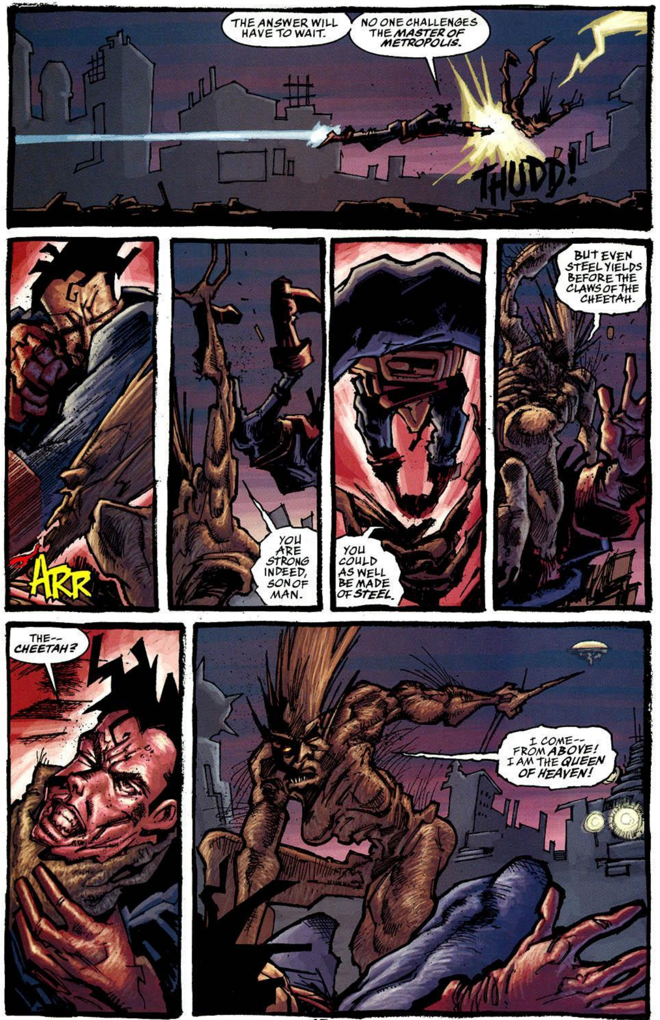

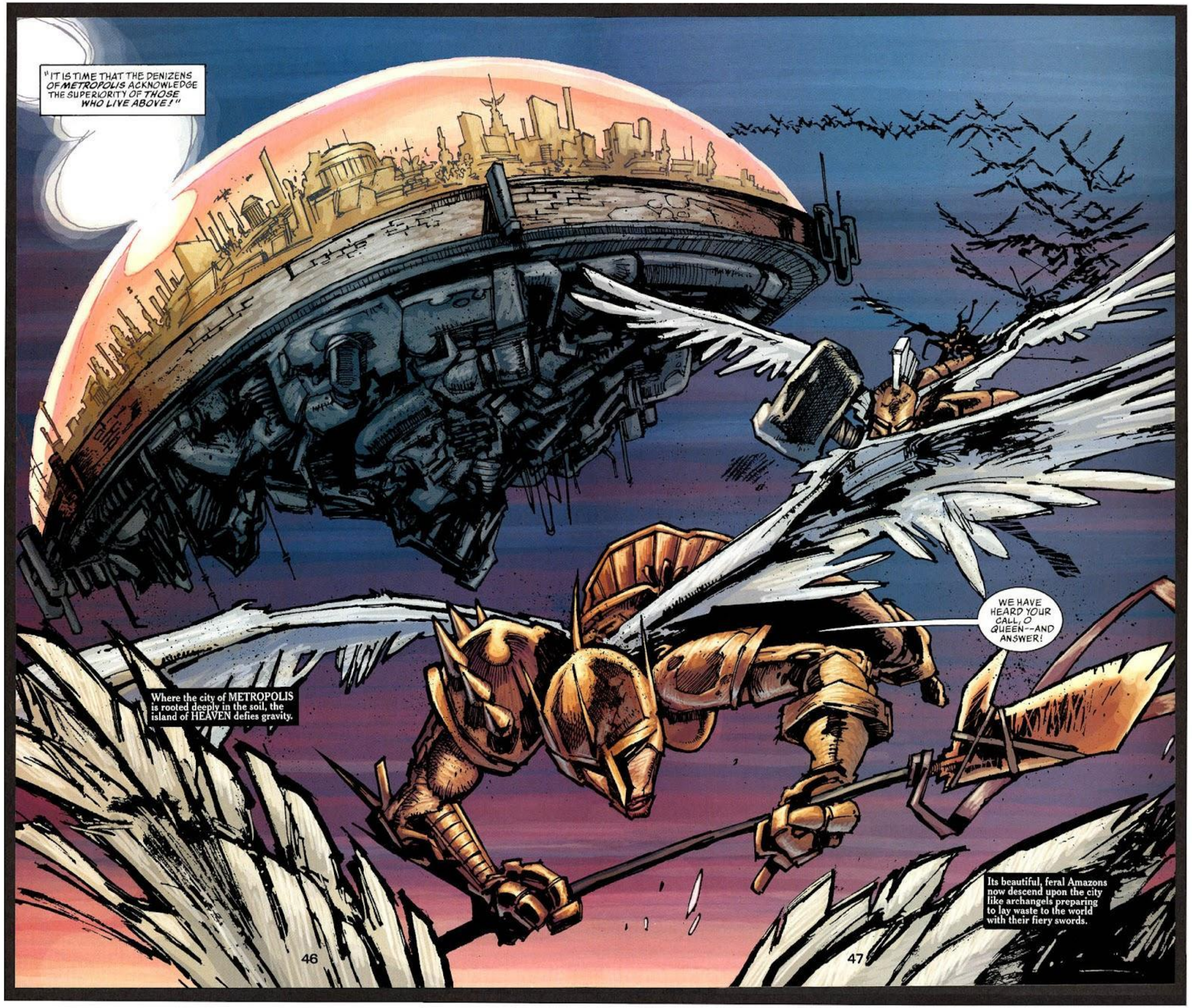
"IT IS TIME THAT THE DENIZENS OF METROPOLIS ACKNOWLEDGE THE SUPERIORITY OF THOSE WHO LIVE ABOVE!"
WE HAVE HEARD YOUR CALL, O QUEEN--AND ANSWER!
Where the city of METROPOLIS is rooted deeply in the soil, the island of HEAVEN defies gravity.
Its beautiful, feral Amazons now descend upon the city like archangels preparing to lay waste to the world with their fiery swords.
46
47

SKREEE
MADNESS!
ATTACK, MY SISTERS!
SKREEE
SCREEE
SKREEEEE
THAT CITY IS RIPE FOR THE PLUCKING! ITS MEN ARE OURS FOR THE TAKING...
BTAK
SLAM
THRAKK
...ONCE ITS LONE DEFENDER IS BUT ONE MORE BLOODY CARCASS ON THE SPIKES OF THE GREAT HALLS OF HEAVEN!
WAP
FRAKK

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WE SERVE THOSE WHO LIVE BELOW.
"BELOW EVEN THE CATACOMBS OF THE WORKERS.
"THEY WERE SET TO GUARD THIS CITY. TO PROTECT IT.
"THEY WERE HERE AT THE BEGINNING, AND THEY WILL REMAIN HERE AT THE END.
"WHAT MY CHILDREN SEE, THEY SEE.
"WHAT MY CHILDREN FEEL, THEY FEEL.
"THEY ARE THE SOUL OF THE CITY."
WE HAVE COME TO CHALLENGE THE MIGHT OF HEAVEN.

cut
shred
slash
I CAN'T SAY I'M ENTIRELY HAPPY ABOUT THE KIND OF HELP YOU BRING, DARK ONE...
...BUT THIS HARDLY SEEMS A GOOD TIME TO BE CHURLISH.
IT COST ME FAR MORE THAN YOU KNOW. FOR TOMORROW, THOUSANDS IN METROPOLIS WILL ASK IN DESPAIR--
--WHY HAS THE MADNESS RETURNED TO OUR CITY?
AMAZONS--BE YOU ANGELS OR DEVILS--PREPARE TO DIE!
SMASH!
YOU AND YOUR WEAKLINGS CANNOT DEFEAT US!

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The SUPER-MAN swept the battleground with eyes of fire.
The NOSFERATU lashed with the dark force of his mind.
WE HOLD THE FIELD, I THINK.
BUT WE HAVEN'T WON THE DAY.
From somewhere, they heard the Cheetah's renewed call for attack.
They summoned their forces, but there were none left to answer.
Then, WITHOUT WARNING...

...came the terrifying sound of the ground being ripped open like flimsy fabric.
The inhuman limbs of THOSE WHO LIVE BELOW rose from the deepest bowels of Metropolis and reached for HEAVEN.
MY MASTER HAS JOINED THE FRAY.
I ALMOST WISH HE HADN'T.
WE ARE DESTROYING THE CITY. EVERYTHING I HAVE FOUGHT AND LIVED FOR IS BEING TURNED TO RUBBLE...
SUDDENLY, a hushed silence fell onto the battlefield.
IS IT A BIRD?
NO.

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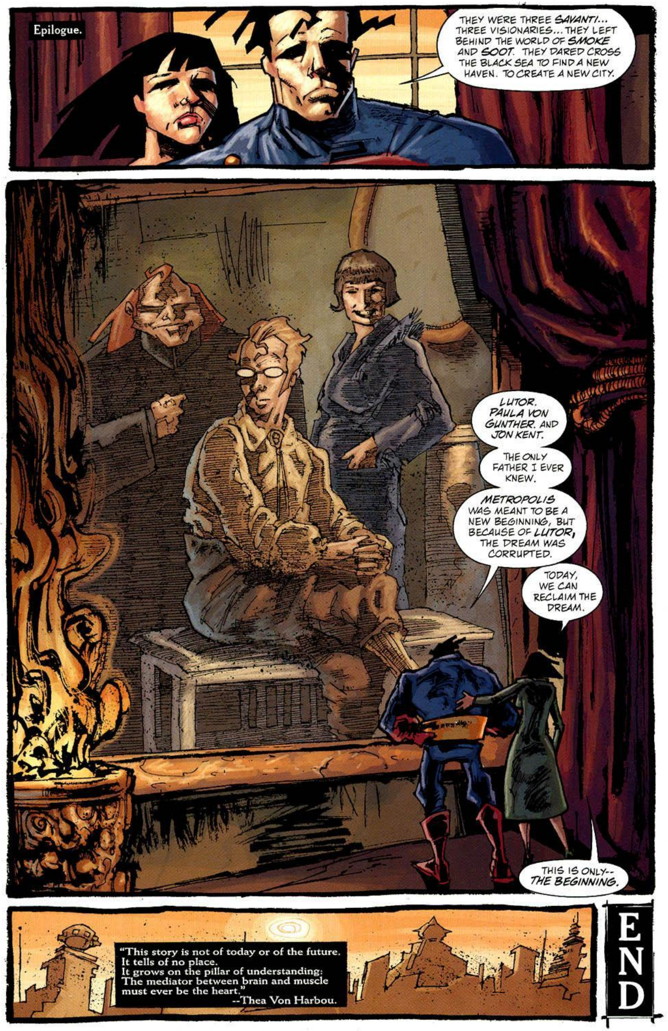
AARRRRRR
...SOME ARE DEAD!
YOU RAPED AND KILLED OUR MOTHER! YOU TORE HEAVEN APART! WHAT YOU COULD NOT REND WITH YOUR CLAWS, YOU POISONED WITH YOUR LIES!
YOU ARE A TWISTED, WRETCHED THING, NOT EVEN DESERVING THE MERCIFUL OBLIVION OF DEATH!
YET I CAN'T FORGET THAT YOU WERE ONCE FIRST AMONG EQUALS.
IF YOU SURRENDER, I WILL SEE THAT YOU ARE REBORN!

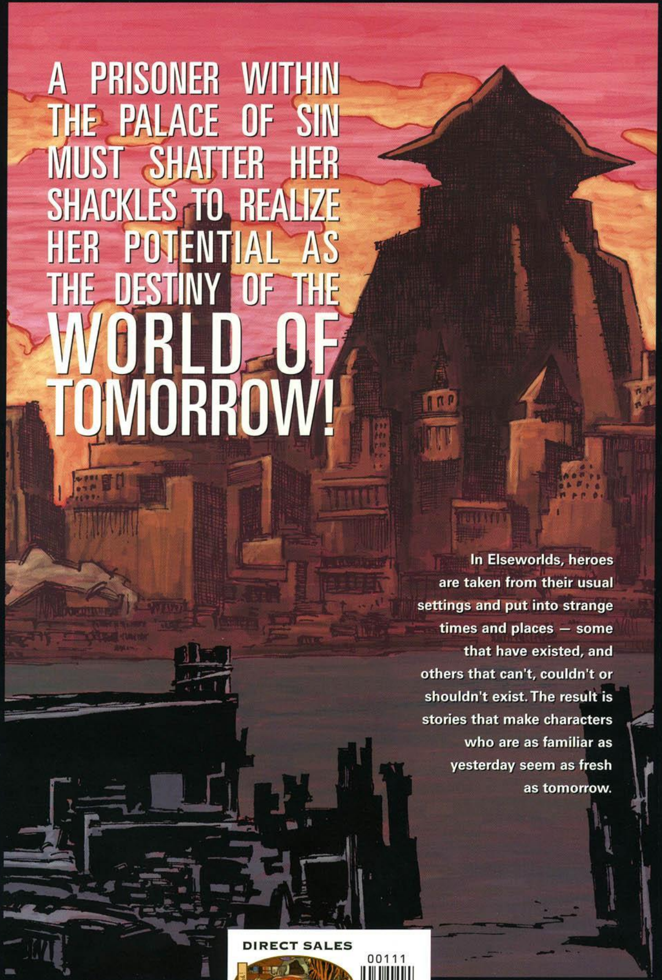
I WILL NOT RETURN TO THE SLIME FROM WHICH YOUR WITCH-MOTHER RAISED ME. WHAT I AM, I WAS, AND THAT IS ALL I CAN EVER BE--OR WISH TO BE!
IF I CANNOT BE THE CHEETAH, THEN I WOULD RATHER NOT BE!
KNOW THAT THE SIN IS YOUR MOTHER'S, WONDER-WOMAN...
NOT MINE! NOT--
ALL HAIL QUEEN DIANA! ALL HAIL THE WONDER-WOMAN!

Later.
IT IS TIME FOR THOSE WHO LIVE ABOVE TO REJOIN THE WORLD BELOW.
AYE. OUR SPLINTERED SOCIETIES HAVE TOO LONG BEEN KEPT APART.
AND OUR COMMON PAST TOO LONG FORGOTTEN.
IT WAS ALL LUTOR'S DOING-- BUT HIS REIGN IS TRULY AND FINALLY OVER.
HIS LUST FOR THE WOMAN WHO SPURNED HIM MADE US ALL HIS PUPPETS.
MARTA... MY MOTHER... SO, SO LONG AGO...
WHEN MAN IS RULED BY HATRED, THEN IT IS THE HOUR FOR EVIL TO TAKE HOLD.
HIS DIARY WILL HELP TREVOR-SON AND ME FILL IN THE GAPS IN OUR HISTORY...
NO, LOIS, NOT ME...

A NEW DESTINY AWAITS ME IN HEAVEN.
YOU HAVE LISTENED TO ME WITH YOUR SOUL. WITH YOUR EYES CLOSED.
YOU CAN OPEN THEM NOW, MY LOVE, FOR YOU HAVE BEEN CHOSEN TO FATHER A NEW RACE OF ANGELS.
IF HE ISN'T UP TO IT, I'M SURE WE CAN FIND OTHER VOLUNTEERS.
WIPE THAT GRIN OFF YOUR FACE, CLARC. YOU'RE STAYING RIGHT HERE.
LET THE SUPER-MAN RULE IN METROPOLIS, AND THE WONDER-WOMAN RULE IN HEAVEN.
YES, THIS IS HOW IT SHOULD BE, AND IT IS GOOD.

The NOSFERATU smiles a grim but satisfied smile.
His masters, THOSE WHO LIVE BELOW, are content as well.
Those ancient machines buried deep under the City which made it possible for man to live on the surface have again fulfilled their age-old mission.
Humanity can once more thrive in safety. It can grow and multiply...
In the days after, Chief of Police BARBARA GORD-SON closed down THE PALACE OF SIN.
BLUE.
And DOKTOR PSYKHO moved into THE CABINET OF DR. WAYNE-SON where last he was seen playing canasta with the inmates. And cheating.
All things considered, the inmates agreed they had a jolly time.
The Super-Man, however, was heard to say he regretted that the city had been defiled with madness, for wherever chaos finds passage, it shall one day return.


Epilogue.
THEY WERE THREE SAVANTI... THREE VISIONARIES... THEY LEFT BEHIND THE WORLD OF SMOKE AND SOOT. THEY DARED CROSS THE BLACK SEA TO FIND A NEW HAVEN. TO CREATE A NEW CITY.
LUTOR. PAULA VON GUNTHER. AND JON KENT.
THE ONLY FATHER I EVER KNEW.
METROPOLIS WAS MEANT TO BE A NEW BEGINNING, BUT BECAUSE OF LUTOR, THE DREAM WAS CORRUPTED.
TODAY, WE CAN RECLAIM THE DREAM.
THIS IS ONLY-- THE BEGINNING.
"This story is not of today or of the future. It tells of no place. It grows on the pillar of understanding: The mediator between brain and muscle must ever be the heart." --Thea Von Harbou.
END



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WHAT WAS I THINKING?
WAS I SUFFERING FROM THE FIRST SYMPTOMS OF SENILITY?
OR MERELY DELUDING MYSELF INTO BELIEVING I COULD HANG UP MY CAPE--
--AND BECOME A GALACTIC TOURIST?
I SHOULD HAVE REALIZED I COULDN'T RUN FROM MY RESPONSIBILITIES.
COULDN'T IGNORE A CRY FOR HELP--
--OR A PLEA FOR JUSTICE.
SUPERMAN IS A LIFETIME COMMITMENT!

THAT WAS EASY.
A LITTLE TOO EASY.
ARE THESE INVADERS REALLY RETREATING OR--
KWA-KWOOOM!
YEP.
DEFINITELY SENILITY.
PEOPLE USED TO SAY I WAS FASTER THAN A SPEEDING BULLET.
A LOT FASTER.
IT NOW TAKES AN EFFORT TO KEEP PACE WITH THAT BULLET--
--WHICH GROWS EVER SPEEDIER AND MORE DESTRUCTIVE.
MAYBE TOMORROW HAS FINALLY ARRIVED FOR THE SO-CALLED MAN OF TOMORROW.
MAYBE I'M JUST TOO OLD TO PLAY HERO.
ON THE OTHER HAND--
--I MAY STILL HAVE A FEW GOOD YEARS LEFT.

SCRATCH ONE ALIEN INVASION!
<WE ARE IN YOUR DEBT, MIGHTY WARRIOR.>
<THE BROTHERS OF THE CRIMSON STORM ARE ENSLAVERS WHO WOULD PLUNDER OUR PLANET AND EXTERMINATE OUR RACE.>
<FUTURE GENERATIONS WILL SING THE PRAISES OF THE SUPERMAN.>
<IT WAS MY HONOR TO AID YOU.>
<YOU HAVE OBVIOUSLY TRAVELED FAR AND ARE A STRANGER TO OUR GALAXY.>
<WHERE DO YOU CALL HOME?>
<A PLANET CALLED EARTH.>
<FOR ALL ITS FAULTS, IT IS A BEAUTIFUL AND VIBRANT WORLD.>
A WORLD I LEFT NEARLY A YEAR AGO--
--AFTER DEFEATING MY GREATEST ENEMY.*
*SUPERMAN/BATMAN ANNUAL #4.

IT MAY BE TIME FOR ME TO RETURN.
METROPOLIS HAS BECOME A REAL CESSPOOL IN THE PAST YEAR.
JUSTICE LEAGUE WATCHTOWER
THE CITY HAS BEEN IN A STATE OF CHAOS EVER SINCE SUPERMAN DISAPPEARED--
--ALONG WITH OUR FORMER MAYOR-FOR-LIFE.
WARHAWK'S RIGHT.
LEX LUTHOR MIGHT HAVE BEEN A CORRUPT DICTATOR, BUT HE KEPT THE DREGS IN LINE.
PETTY CRIMINALS AND SMALL GANGS SPROUT LIKE WEEDS IN AN UNTENDED FIELD.
WE FIND OURSELVES OVERWHELMED BY THEIR SHEER NUMBER.
AHEM
WHAT GREEN LANTERN IS TRYING TO SAY--
--WE COULD USE YOUR HELP, BATMAN.
I'M SYMPATHETIC, AQUAGIRL.
BUT I HAVE ALL THE STREET CRIME I CAN HANDLE HERE IN NEO-GOTHAM.
FEEL FREE TO CALL IF YOU EVER NEED ME FOR SOMETHING BIG.
I WARNED YOU ABOUT THE JUSTICE LEAGUE, TERRY.
THEY THINK THEIR MISSIONS SHOULD ALWAYS TAKE PRIORITY.
WHEN WILL THEY LEARN, BRUCE?
THE ONLY MISSIONS THAT COUNT ARE YOURS.
MAYBE I SHOULD VISIT NEO-GOTHAM AND MAKE A PERSONAL APPEAL.
INDEED, AND TAKE MICRON TO ACCOMPANY YOU.
I DON'T BLAME BATMAN FOR TURNING US DOWN, BARDA.
I'M TIRED OF WASTING MY TIME ON THE TWIPS AND DREGS--

"--AND WISH WE COULD FACE A REAL CHALLENGE."
HOBBS BAY.
A DIVISION OF THE METROPOLIS DETENTION SYSTEM.
YOU HAVE A VISITOR, MANGLER.
HOBBS DAY DETEN
CAN'T BELIEVE YOU LET YOUR LITTLE GIRL COME TO A PLACE LIKE THIS.
SHE MUST BE REAL PROUD OF HER DADDY.
GET OFF THE MAN'S BACK, ROGERS.
MACARRO'S BEEN A MODEL PRISONER.
HERE! LET'S LOSE THE CUFFS BEFORE YOUR DAUGHTER SEES THEM.
MINA--?
YOU! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
W-WHERE'S MY MINA?
TERESA, PLEASE TELL ME THAT NOTHING HAS HAPPENED TO--
SHE'S FINE, MARCO.
AS FINE AS ANY YOUNG GIRL CAN BE WHEN HER FATHER'S IN PRISON.
I'VE MADE A DECISION, MARCO.
THESE VISITS HAVE TO STOP.
MINA HAS ALREADY WASTED TOO MANY TEARS ON YOU.
PLEASE, TERESA... DON'T DO THIS!
SHE'S MY STRENGTH.
MY ONLY RAY OF SUNSHINE.

I KNOW I'VE DONE WRONG, TERESA.
I'M TRYING TO BE A BETTER MAN FOR MINA'S SAKE.
I VOLUNTEER FOR EVERY SLAG JOB TO EARN GOOD TIME--
--JUST SO I CAN GET OUT OF HERE SOONER.
I KNOW YOU'RE MAKING AN EFFORT, MARCO.
BUT MINA WILL BE A GROWN WOMAN BEFORE YOU'RE RELEASED.
SHE NEEDS TO MOVE ON.
WE BOTH DO.
GOODBYE, MARCO.
TOUGH BREAK, MANGLER.
CAN'T BLAME A PRETTY GIRL LIKE THAT FOR WANTING A LIFE.
MAYBE I SHOULD GIVE HER A SHOUT.
ENOUGH, ROGERS!
THERE'S A LINE EVEN YOU SHOULDN'T CROSS.
YOU UP FOR AN OUTSIDE WORK DETAIL, MACARRO?
MIGHT TAKE YOUR MIND OFF YOUR PROBLEMS.
WHY NOT? WHAT ELSE I GOT TO DO?
YOU COULD STARE AT THE WALLS LIKE THE OTHER CELL-SLAGS--

"--AND MOAN ABOUT THE SAD STATE OF YOUR LIFE."
I'M SORRY I'VE BEEN AWAY SO LONG.
I NEEDED SOME TIME TO MYSELF.
TO PONDER MY FUTURE.
TO GRIEVE FOR MY PAST.
I OWE YOU TWO SO MUCH.
YOU MADE ME THE MAN I REALLY AM--
--AND HELPED MOLD THE LEGEND I STILL STRIVE TO BE.
JONATHAN KENT
Beloved Husband and Father
WHERE DO I GO FROM HERE?
THE WORLD HAS CHANGED SO MUCH OVER THE YEARS.
DOES IT STILL NEED A SUPERMAN?

QUIT YOUR BELLYACHING AND GEAR UP!
LEX LABS
I WANT THIS PLACE GLEAMING BEFORE THE PAINTERS ARRIVE.
WE'RE WORKING AS FAST AS WE CAN, SIR.
SHUT UP, WILLARD! ANOTHER WORD AND YOU'RE ON TOILET DETAIL--
--AND YOU CAN TAKE MANGLER MACARRO WITH YOU!
ME?!? I AIN'T SAID A WORD, ROGERS.
WHY YOU ALWAYS GOT TO BUST MY-- HEY!
TZAK!
WHAT IS THAT STUFF?
YOU ASKING ME?!?
DON'T EVEN TRY TO PLAY INNOCENT!
YOU MUST HAVE KNOWN IT WAS THERE.
SUCK FLOOR AND SHOW ME YOUR HANDS!
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TRYING TO PULL, BUT I'M NOT FALLING FOR IT.
Y'KNOW, ROGERS...
SLAG YOU!
TWAK!

ARE YOU CRAZY, MACARRO?
ROGERS ISN'T WORTH IT.
DROP HIM AND BACK OFF!
DON'T MAKE ME SHOOT YOU!
BRRRAAAAAP!!
SKRASSSSH!
ARRRRGGH!
LOCK DOWN THE OTHER PRISONERS AND CALL THE PARAMEDICS.
WE NEED MEDIVACS FOR BOTH ROGERS AND--
--MACARRO?!?

IN ENTERTAINMENT NEWS: UNCLEAN THOTS HAVE CONFIRMED A REUNION TOUR AND...
NOT ONLY DOES MY TEAM GATHER THE NEWS, BUT OUR NEW O-PHONE DELIVERS THE HEADLINES DIRECTLY TO YOU. PRETTY SCHWAY, HUH?
SCHWAY, JIMMY?!?
IT'S WHAT THE KIDS ARE SAYING THESE DAYS, CLARK.
WHEN DID JIMMY OLSEN BECOME A MEDIA MOGUL?
WHEN HE INVESTED HIS DAILY PLANET SEVERANCE IN A SMALL START-UP THAT TOOK OFF.
HERE! THIS ONE'S FOR YOU.
THAT'S VERY GENEROUS, JIMMY.
YOU DID PLENTY FOR ME OVER THE YEARS.
I'M SO GLAD YOU CALLED. I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU SINCE THE FUNERAL.
I...I'VE BEEN TRAVELING...TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHAT COMES NEXT.
I MAY HAVE A SOLUTION. MY NEWS DIVISION COULD USE AN EXPERIENCED REPORTER LIKE YOU.
YOU'D BE DOING ME A FAVOR AND CAN EVEN SET YOUR OWN HOURS.
I APPRECIATE THE--WHAT'S THAT?!?
ZEEEEE! ZEEEEE!
SOUND FAMILIAR? I PROGRAMMED THAT RING TONE ESPECIALLY FOR YOU.
I'M SERIOUS ABOUT THE JOB, CLARK. IT'S WIN-WIN. I NEED THE HELP AND IT'LL GIVE YOU SOMETHING TO DO.
TRUST ME, JIMMY--
IN INTERNATIONAL NEWS...

"--I RARELY HAVE A PROBLEM KEEPING BUSY."
A CLEANING CREW?!?
YOU CALLED THE JUSTICE LEAGUE TO DEAL WITH A CLEANING CREW?
THEY'RE CONVICTS ON LOAN FROM HOBBS DETENTION.
ALL I KNOW IS THE GUARDS CALLED FOR MEDIVACS AND THEN WE SUDDENLY HAVE SOME KIND OF HOSTAGE SITUATION.
LEX LABS
WHAT ARE THEY DEMANDING?
"MORE MOPS AND LARGER BUCKETS?!?"
DON'T KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENED TO ME.
DON'T REALLY CARE.
BUT I LIKE IT!
SPLAQUOOOOSH!

W-WHAT WAS THAT HORRIBLE SOUND?
STAND READY, WARHAWK!
I'VE ONLY HEARD ITS LIKE IN THE TORTURE PITS OF APOKOLIPS--
--WHEN BODIES WERE TORN AND TWISTED INSIDE OUT!
RUN!
FIND A PLACE TO HIDE!
I'M TIRED OF VINDICTIVE GUARDS AND DAILY INDIGNITIES.
KWA-KRASH!
I'M DONE WITH GROVELING AND CHOKING ON FEAR.
NO MORE PAIN OR HUMILIATION FOR MANGLER MACARRO!
TWAAAAK!
IT'S TIME FOR A LITTLE PAYBACK.
IT'S TIME FOR ARMAGEDDON!
NEXT TIME I WHINE FOR A CHALLENGE--
--TELL ME TO ZIP IT!

I NEVER THOUGHT I'D RETURN TO OUR OLD APARTMENT, LOIS.
IT FEELS SO EMPTY WITHOUT YOU.
SO DO I.
I'M LOST, SWEETHEART-- DRIFTING AIMLESSLY!
YOU WERE MY ANCHOR.
HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO--
ZEEEEE! ZEEEEE!
IN LOCAL NEWS: A META-POWERED CREATURE, IDENTIFIED ONLY AS ARMORGEDDON, IS CURRENTLY BATTLING THE JUSTICE LEAGUE--
--AT THE SITE OF AN EXPERIMENTAL LABORATORY THAT ONCE BELONGED TO FORMER MAYOR-FOR-LIFE LEX LUTHOR.

STUPID COSTUMED SLAGS!
WARNED 'EM TO BACK OFF.
THEY PAID THE PRICE FOR DISRESPECTING ME.
SO WILL ANYONE ELSE WHO GETS IN MY WAY.
YOU COPS ARE JUST WASTING YOUR BULLETS.
NOTHING CAN STOP ME FROM CLAIMING WHAT'S RIGHTFULLY MINE.
ABSOLUTELY NOTHING!
TZING! BDOOM!
BDOOM!
SUCH CLAIMS ARE HIGHLY DEBATABLE--
SPWAKKK!
--AND HARDLY ACCURATE.
PLEASE ATTEND TO MY COMRADES, OFFICERS.
Y-YOU GOT IT, MISTER LANTERN--AND THANKS!
THERE IS NO NEED FOR VIOLENCE, MY FRIEND.
A GRATUITOUS BATTLE WILL NOT SERVE YOUR CAUSE.
IF YOU AGREE TO SURRENDER PEACEFULLY, I WILL PERSONALLY SEE THAT YOU RECEIVE JUSTICE.

SERIOUSLY--?!?
THAT'S YOUR BEST OFFER?
JUSTICE AIN'T A WORD I GREW UP WITH.
I ALWAYS FIGURED IT WAS RESERVED FOR THE TWIPS WITH FULL BELLIES AND FLASHY 'FITS.
YOU CAN JUST TAKE YOUR JUSTICE AND SHOVE IT WHERE THE--HEY!
HANDLE HIM GENTLY, MEN.
THIS LAD'S A HERO.
Y-YES, SIR!
W-WHERE DID YOU COME FROM?
LAST I HEARD YOU WERE RETIRED--
--OR DEAD.

SORRY TO DISAPPOINT YOU--
--BUT RUMORS SHOULD NEVER BE CONFUSED WITH FACTS.
YOU'VE CAUSED ENOUGH DESTRUCTION FOR ONE DAY, SON.
I ADVISE YOU TO STAND DOWN.
YOU WON'T LIKE THE ALTERNATIVE.

YOU GOTTA BE WHAT?
LATE SIXTIES?!?
EARLY SEVENTIES?!?
FIND YOURSELF A ROCKING CHAIR AND STAY OUT OF MY FACE, GRANDPA.
IF YOU KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT ME, YOU ALREADY REALIZE--
--SUPERMAN NEVER BACKS OFF.
WHOMMP!
I WAS KIND OF HOPING YOU'D SAY THAT.
UFFFT
Y-YOU'RE STRONGER THAN I THOUGHT.
AND YOU'RE DUMBER.
YOU JUST FELL FOR THE OLD ONE-TWO SWITCHEROO.
CARELESS.
VERY CARELESS.

I USUALLY ALLOW MY OPPONENT THE FIRST SHOT SO THAT I CAN DETERMINE HIS METTLE.
NOT THE BEST STRATEGY IN THIS CASE.
IF ARMORGEDDON GAINED HIS POWERS FROM SOMETHING IN LEX LABS--
--THE ODDS SEEM TO FAVOR KRYPTONITE IN THE MIX.
I FELT THAT PUNCH.
A LOT MORE THAN I SHOULD HAVE.
NO SENSE TAKING CHANCES.
GET OFF ME, YOU CRAZY OLD MAN!
I AIN'T GOT THE TIME TO WASTE WITH YOU.
I'M HEADED FOR A FAMILY REUNION--
--AND CAN'T MISS MY LITTLE GIRL'S BEDTIME.

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--A HAPPILY EVER AFTER?!?
P-PLEASE STOP CRYING, MINA.
I KNOW YOU MISS YOUR DADDY.
I DO, TOO.
SNIFF SNIFF
WHY DON'T WE HANG A FEW MORE PICTURES OF--
OH, GOD!
D-DADDY--?!?
HI, BABY.
I KNOW I LOOK DIFFERENT, BUT IT'S REALLY ME.
I'M STILL THE SAME OLD BIG BEAR WHO LOVES HIS LITTLE BUNNY--
--TO TEENY WEENIE PIECES.
AAAAYYYYEEEEEEEEE

YOU NEED TO COME WITH ME, SON.
YOU'RE SCARING THE CHILD--
--AND THAT'S NOT HOW YOU WANT HER TO REMEMBER YOU.
I...
I'M SORRY.
YOU CAN SLAG THE SYMPATHY ACT, OLD MAN.
YOU GOT A JOB.
DO IT!
YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO PROTECT THE INNOCENT--
--TO KEEP MY MINA SAFE FROM MONSTERS--
--LIKE ME.
DO YOUR JOB, MAN--

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HANG ON TO YOUR LUNCH, SON, BECAUSE WE'RE HEADED--
UP!
UP!
AND AWAY!
P-PRETTY TRICKY, OLD MAN.
C-CAUGHT ME COMPLETELY BY SURPRISE.
B-BUT I GOT ONE LAST TRICK UP MY SLEEVE.
I'M GONNA GO DOWN IN HISTORY AS--

--THE MAN WHO SLAGGED SUPERMAN!
S-SEE YOU ON THE OTHER SIDE, OLD MAN.
A-ALTHOUGH I DOUBT--
--WE'RE HEADED FOR--
--THE SAME PLAAAAH

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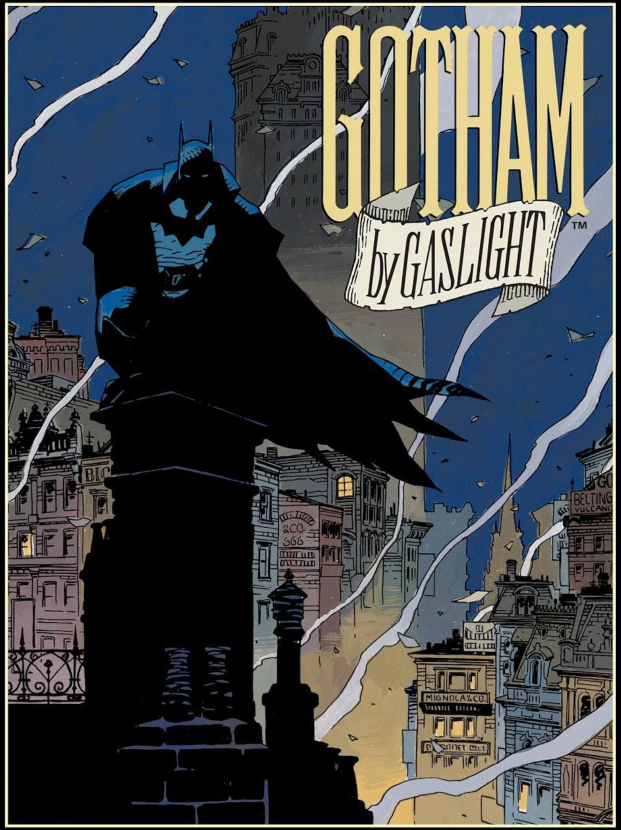
HOME IS THE HERO!

TOM DEFALCO & RON FRENZ PLOT, PENCILS AND SCRIPT SAL BUSCEMA FINISHED ART
DAVE SHARPE LETTERING CHRIS BECKETT COLORIST KWANZA JOHNSON EDITOR
SUPERMAN CREATED BY JERRY SIEGEL AND JOE SHUSTER

A Tale of the

BATMAN



Brian Augustyn ∽ Michael Mignola ∽ P. Craig Russell ∽ Eduardo Barreto

*G*OTHAM BY GASLIGHT

Brian Augustyn
Writer

Michael Mignola
Pencils

P. Craig Russell
Inks

David Hornung
Colorist

John Workman
Letterer

Dedicated to Nadine, with love.
— Brian Augustyn

To Elsa Lanchester, the Bride of Frankenstein
— Michael Mignola

*M*ASTER OF THE FUTURE

Brian Augustyn
Writer

Eduardo Barreto
Artist

Steve Oliff
Colorist

Willie Schubert
Letterer

With love to my wife Alicia, for her patience and support.
— Eduardo Barreto

To my daughter Carrie - and to her Mom, Nadine - with love to both forever.
— Brian Augustyn

Batman created by Bob Kane

FROM HELL *by Robert Bloch*

My name is Jack.

At least that's what I called myself in a letter and a card to the Central News Agency. When I wrote to the Whitechapel Vigilance Committee the address I gave was "From Hell." I sent along half of a kidney torn out of a victim and told them I fried and ate the other half. No need for a signature because all London knew it, all the world knew my name.

Between August 31st and November 9th, 1888, I cut the throats of five women – and that wasn't all I cut. Four died quickly on the streets, two of them within an hour on the same night. The fifth one's life was knifed in her room and there I took my own sweet time.

Mind you, the police were everywhere, and hundreds of detectives on assignment from Scotland Yard. The whole city was on the lookout, four million pairs of eyes searching the shadows.

But after that fifth murder I disappeared into those shadows and they never found me. All they had was the nickname I'd given them when I nicked the ladies.

Some said I was a doctor, a medical student, a slaughterhouse worker, perhaps a boot-maker skillful with a knife. They were suspicious of midwives who traveled the slum streets without attracting attention; for the same reason they suspected the police. Others thought I was a barrister named Druitt, a Russian secret agent, a Yankee whose letters used American slang, a murderer named Dr. Neill Cream, or even Queen Victoria's own physician, Sir William Gull. The Queen herself had theories about foreign sailors.

Wrong. Dead wrong. I fooled all London. And I could fool them anywhere, even in Gotham City, if that's where I chose to appear.

Batman?

Yes, I know the name. And perhaps he'll soon have reason to remember yours truly,

JACK THE RIPPER.

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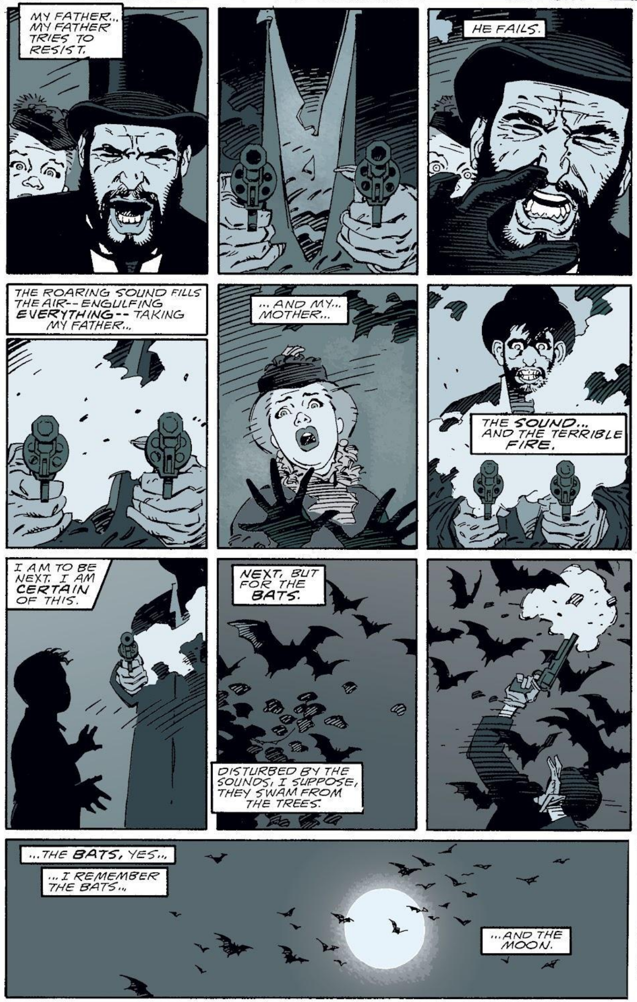
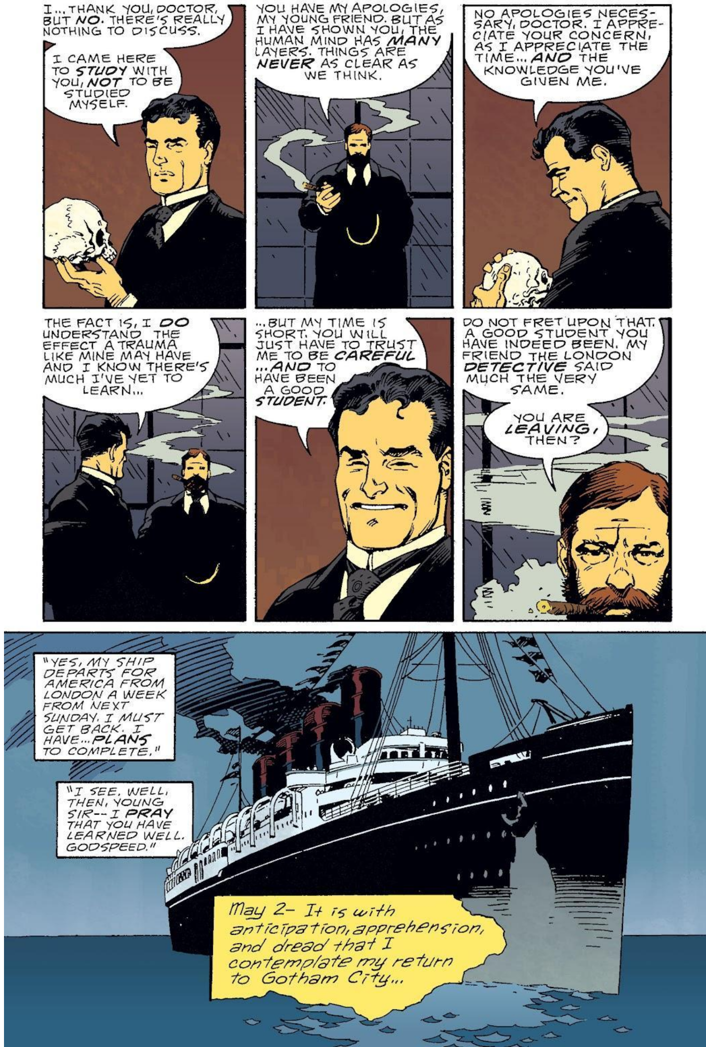
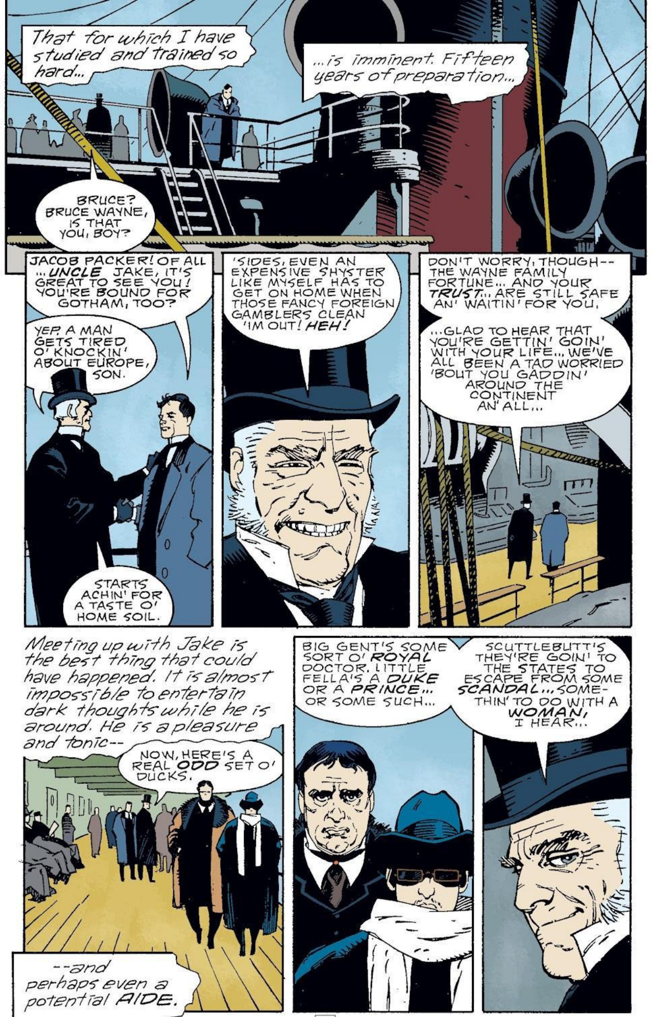
I REMEMBER THE MOON.
A COLD AND BLOATED ORB, IT WATCHES WITH INDIFFERENCE AS WE PASS BELOW.
I REMEMBER MY PARENTS SMILING--RECALLING SOME INCIDENT OF OUR EVENING IN TOWN.
THEY ARE SO HAPPY.
HOW QUICKLY THAT CAN CHANGE, EH?
SOMETHING HAPPENS... THE COACH STOPS ABRUPTLY.
A MAN STANDS IN THE ROAD... WAITING.
A MAN WITH GUNS.
I AM NOT QUITE SURE HOW, BUT WE ARE SUDDENLY STANDING IN THE ROAD AS WELL.
THE MAN DEMANDS OUR VALUABLES...
...FORCIBLY.


MY FATHER... MY FATHER TRIES TO RESIST.
HE FAILS.
THE ROARING SOUND FILLS THE AIR--ENGULFING EVERYTHING--TAKING MY FATHER...
...AND MY... MOTHER...
THE SOUND... AND THE TERRIBLE FIRE.
I AM TO BE NEXT. I AM CERTAIN OF THIS.
NEXT, BUT FOR THE BATS.
DISTURBED BY THE SOUNDS, I SUPPOSE, THEY SWAM FROM THE TREES.
...THE BATS, YES...
...I REMEMBER THE BATS...
...AND THE MOON.

VIENNA. 1889.
THAT IS MY DREAM, DOCTOR. IT IS ALWAYS THE SAME.
AND A MOST INTERESTING DREAM. A SIGNIFICANT DREAM, TOO, I THINK... YES?
I AM PARTICULARLY... FOND OF THE BAT IMAGES. WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE THEY SIGNIFY?
SIGNIFY? NOTHING. IT'S JUST A DREAM.
YES, PERHAPS. BUT DREAMS CAN TELL US SO MUCH, YOU KNOW. THEY HOLD MANY SECRETS.
THAT MAY BE TRUE OF YOUR PATIENTS, DR. FREUD... IT IS NOT TRUE OF ME, I ASSURE YOU.
MY DREAM IS NOT SOME SYMBOL-LADEN PUZZLE. IT IS A RATHER PROSAIC REPLAYING OF AN ACTUAL EVENT.
MY PARENTS AND I WERE WAYLAID BY A BRIGAND WHO... WHO MURDERED THEM.
ACH, SUCH A TRAGEDY! STRUCK DOWN LIKE THAT, IN FRONT OF YOUR SO-VERY-YOUNG EYES. IT MUST HAVE LEFT TERRIBLE SCARS...
WE CAN DISCUSS THIS... IF YOU WISH.


I... THANK YOU, DOCTOR, BUT NO. THERE'S REALLY NOTHING TO DISCUSS.
I CAME HERE TO STUDY WITH YOU, NOT TO BE STUDIED MYSELF.
YOU HAVE MY APOLOGIES, MY YOUNG FRIEND. BUT AS I HAVE SHOWN YOU, THE HUMAN MIND HAS MANY LAYERS. THINGS ARE NEVER AS CLEAR AS WE THINK.
NO APOLOGIES NECESSARY, DOCTOR. I APPRECIATE YOUR CONCERN, AS I APPRECIATE THE TIME... AND THE KNOWLEDGE YOU'VE GIVEN ME.
THE FACT IS, I DO UNDERSTAND THE EFFECT A TRAUMA LIKE MINE MAY HAVE AND I KNOW THERE'S MUCH I'VE YET TO LEARN...
...BUT MY TIME IS SHORT. YOU WILL JUST HAVE TO TRUST ME TO BE CAREFUL ...AND TO HAVE BEEN A GOOD STUDENT.
DO NOT FRET UPON THAT. A GOOD STUDENT YOU HAVE INDEED BEEN. MY FRIEND THE LONDON DETECTIVE SAID MUCH THE VERY SAME.
YOU ARE LEAVING, THEN?
"YES, MY SHIP DEPARTS FOR AMERICA FROM LONDON A WEEK FROM NEXT SUNDAY. I MUST GET BACK. I HAVE... PLANS TO COMPLETE."
"I SEE. WELL, THEN, YOUNG SIR-- I PRAY THAT YOU HAVE LEARNED WELL. GODSPEED."
May 2– It is with anticipation, apprehension, and dread that I contemplate my return to Gotham City...



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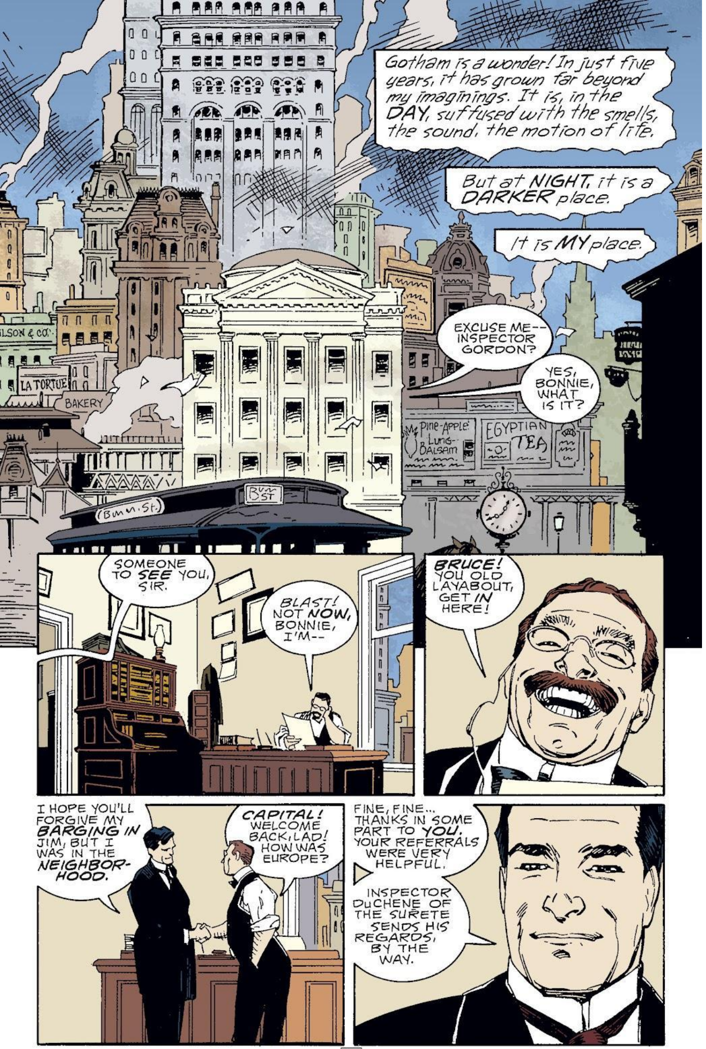
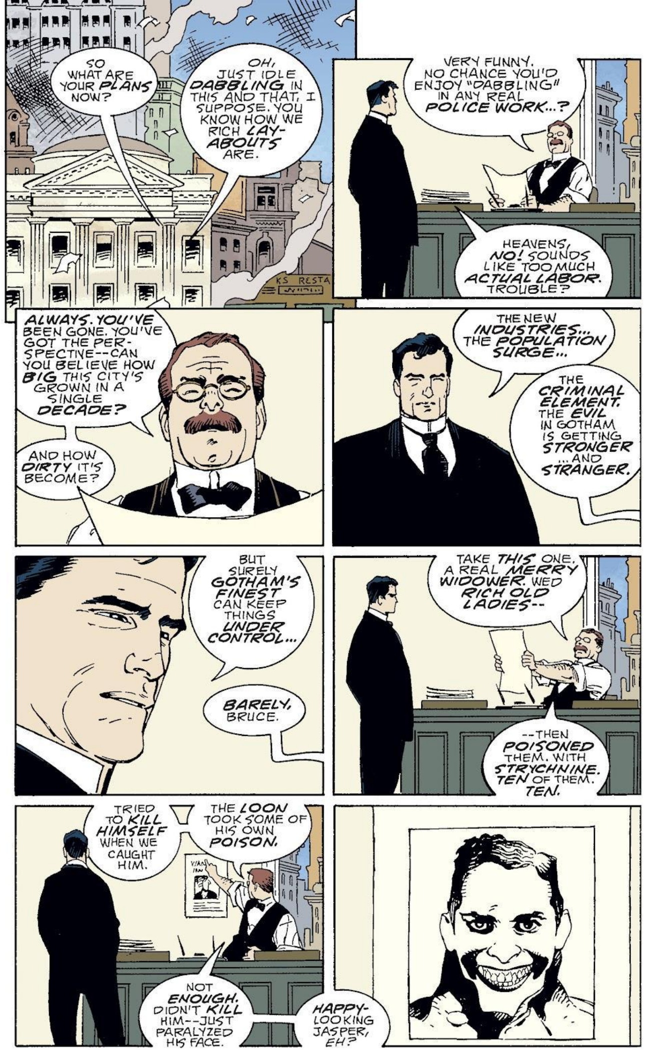

Gotham is a wonder! In just five years, it has grown far beyond my imaginings. It is, in the DAY, suffused with the smells, the sound, the motion of life.
But at NIGHT, it is a DARKER place.
It is MY place.
LA TORTUE
BAKERY
Pine-Apple Lung-Balsam
EGYPTIAN TEA
EXCUSE ME-- INSPECTOR GORDON?
YES, BONNIE, WHAT IS IT?
SOMEONE TO SEE YOU, SIR.
BLAST! NOT NOW, BONNIE, I'M--
BRUCE! YOU OLD LAYABOUT, GET IN HERE!
I HOPE YOU'LL FORGIVE MY BARGING IN JIM, BUT I WAS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD.
CAPITAL! WELCOME BACK, LAD! HOW WAS EUROPE?
FINE, FINE... THANKS IN SOME PART TO YOU. YOUR REFERRALS WERE VERY HELPFUL.
INSPECTOR DuCHENE OF THE SURETE SENDS HIS REGARDS, BY THE WAY.


SO WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS NOW?
OH, JUST IDLE DABBLING IN THIS AND THAT, I SUPPOSE. YOU KNOW HOW WE RICH LAY-ABOUTS ARE.
VERY FUNNY. NO CHANCE YOU'D ENJOY "DABBLING" IN ANY REAL POLICE WORK...?
HEAVENS, NO! SOUNDS LIKE TOO MUCH ACTUAL LABOR. TROUBLE?
ALWAYS. YOU'VE BEEN GONE. YOU'VE GOT THE PERSPECTIVE--CAN YOU BELIEVE HOW BIG THIS CITY'S GROWN IN A SINGLE DECADE?
AND HOW DIRTY IT'S BECOME?
THE NEW INDUSTRIES... THE POPULATION SURGE...
THE CRIMINAL ELEMENT. THE EVIL IN GOTHAM IS GETTING STRONGER ...AND STRANGER.
BUT SURELY GOTHAM'S FINEST CAN KEEP THINGS UNDER CONTROL...
BARELY, BRUCE.
TAKE THIS ONE. A REAL MERRY WIDOWER. WED RICH OLD LADIES--
--THEN POISONED THEM. WITH STRYCHNINE. TEN OF THEM. TEN.
TRIED TO KILL HIMSELF WHEN WE CAUGHT HIM.
THE LOON TOOK SOME OF HIS OWN POISON.
NOT ENOUGH. DIDN'T KILL HIM--JUST PARALYZED HIS FACE.
HAPPY-LOOKING JASPER, EH?

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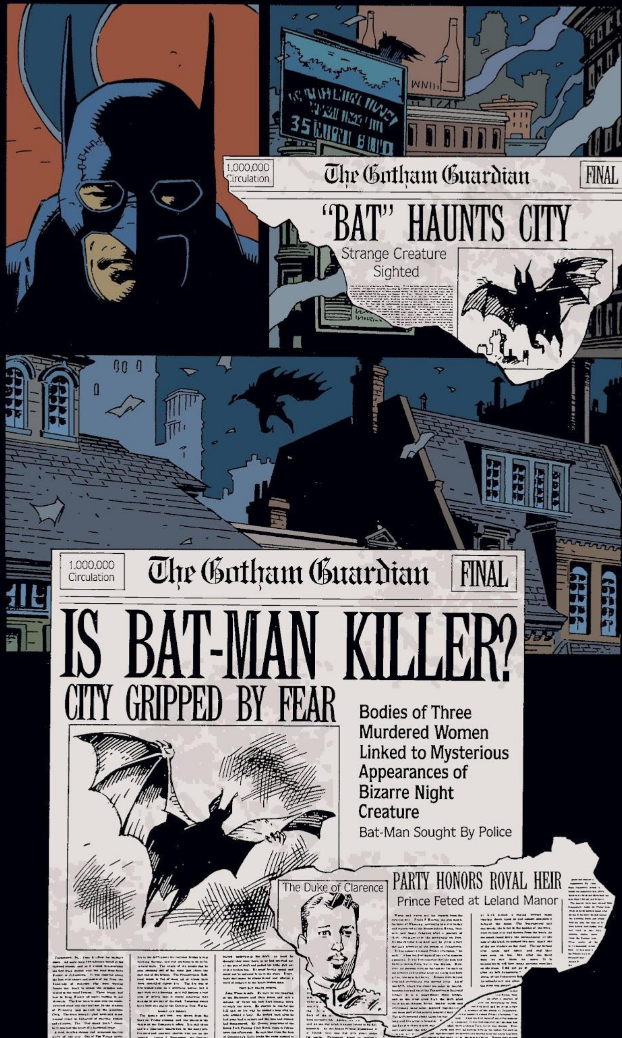
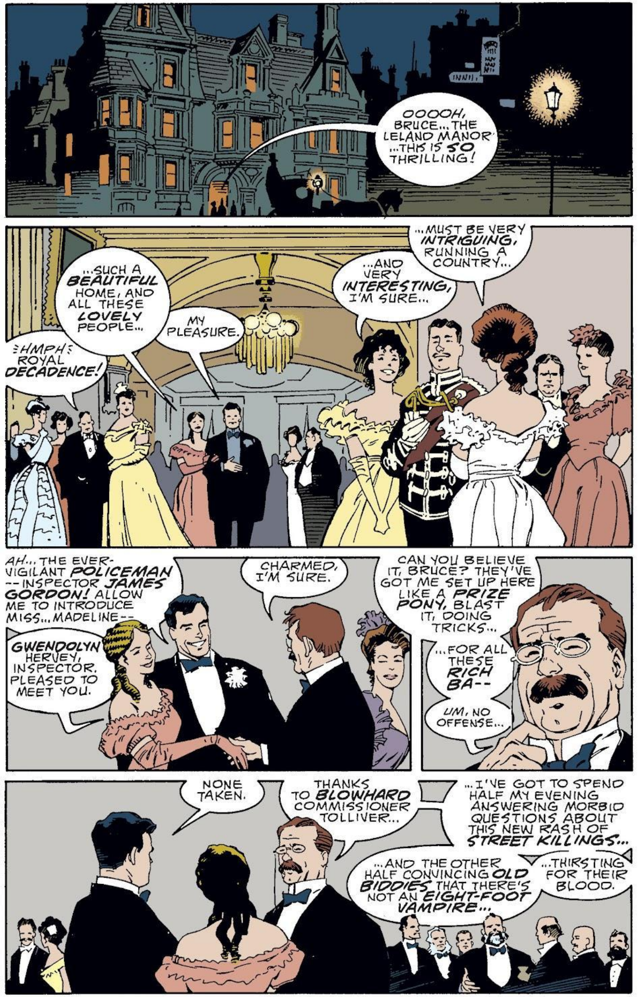
HOLEE...
WHAT IN...
...HELL! UMPH
BRISCOE! WHAT'S-- UNGH
AAAAA!
HOLD IT THERE, YA FREAK, OR I'LL...

YOU!
I DON'T KNOW WHUT THE DEVIL YOU ARE, BUT YER CLEARIN' OUT...
...ELSE I'M BLOWIN' THIS FELLA'S HEAD ALL OVER THE ROOM!
I MEAN IT! I'LL DO IT... STAY BACK!
GET AWAY! I'LL KILL 'IM! ...I WILL!
I... I'LL... NO, PLEASE... OH GOD!
I'LL TAKE IT FROM HERE, MISTER... THANKS.
BUT-- IF YOU DON'T MIND MY ASKING --WHAT IN HEAVEN'S NAME ARE...
...YOU?!

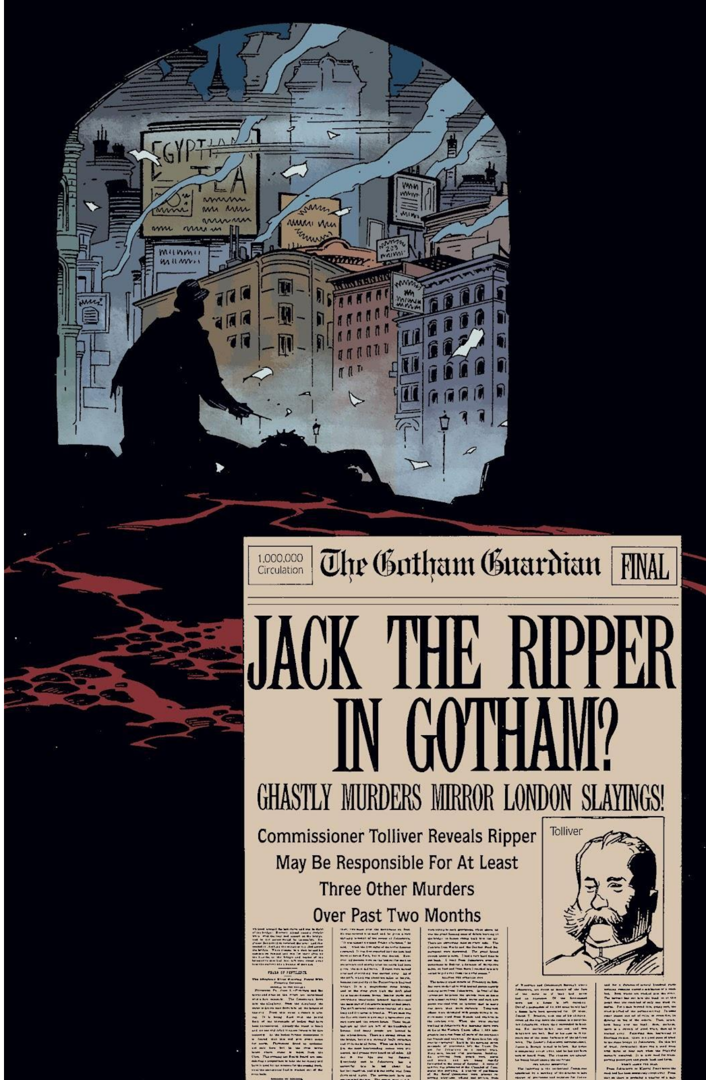
Guardian
July 6, 1889
Page 9
COAL FIRES THREATEN EAST-END
DOCK ROBBERY THWARTED
Mysterious Creature Spotted
JEPSEN'S MINERAL SPIRITS
DIVORCE FOR J.L. VIRGIL
July 19, 1889
Gotham City Gazette
Page 6
BAT-MAN DESCRIBED BY WITNESSES
BODY FOUND
Young Woman Is Brutally Slain
RUBBER GOODS

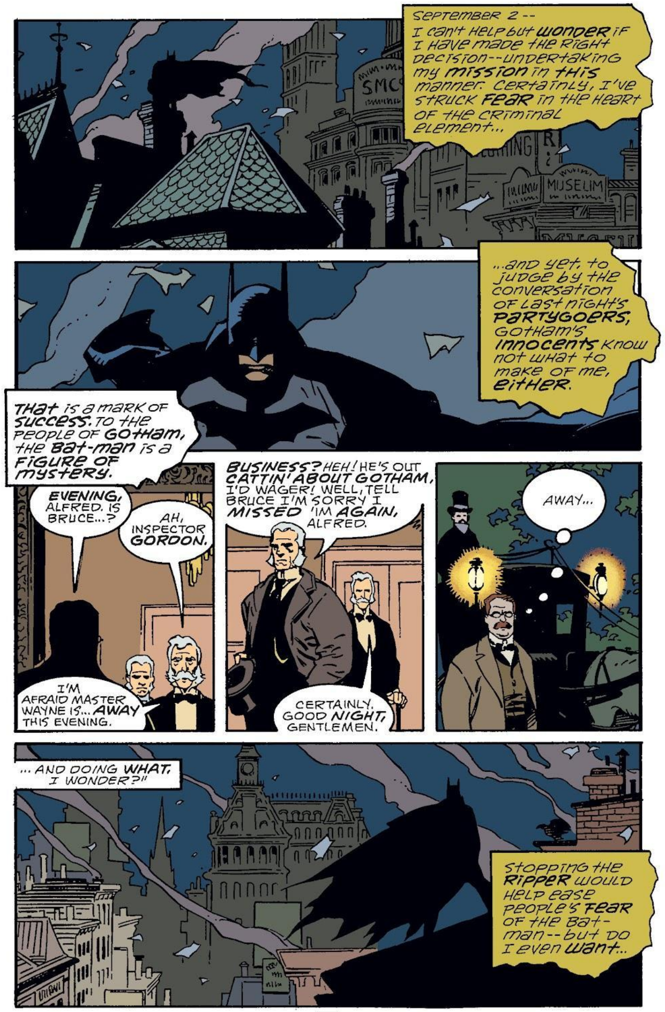

35 CURN BLVD
1,000,000 Circulation
The Gotham Guardian
FINAL
"BAT" HAUNTS CITY
Strange Creature Sighted
1,000,000 Circulation
The Gotham Guardian
FINAL
IS BAT-MAN KILLER?
CITY GRIPPED BY FEAR
Bodies of Three Murdered Women Linked to Mysterious Appearances of Bizarre Night Creature
Bat-Man Sought By Police
The Duke of Clarence
PARTY HONORS ROYAL HEIR
Prince Feted at Leland Manor


OOOOH, BRUCE... THE LELAND MANOR ...THIS IS SO THRILLING!
...SUCH A BEAUTIFUL HOME, AND ALL THESE LOVELY PEOPLE...
MY PLEASURE.
...AND VERY INTERESTING, I'M SURE...
...MUST BE VERY INTRIGUING, RUNNING A COUNTRY...
HMPH ROYAL DECADENCE!
AH... THE EVER-VIGILANT POLICEMAN --INSPECTOR JAMES GORDON! ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MISS... MADELINE--
GWENDOLYN HERVEY, INSPECTOR. PLEASED TO MEET YOU.
CHARMED, I'M SURE.
CAN YOU BELIEVE IT, BRUCE? THEY'VE GOT ME SET UP HERE LIKE A PRIZE PONY, BLAST IT, DOING TRICKS...
...FOR ALL THESE RICH BA--
UM, NO OFFENSE...
NONE TAKEN.
THANKS TO BLOWHARD COMMISSIONER TOLLIVER...
...I'VE GOT TO SPEND HALF MY EVENING ANSWERING MORBID QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS NEW RASH OF STREET KILLINGS...
...AND THE OTHER HALF CONVINCING OLD BIDDIES THAT THERE'S NOT AN EIGHT-FOOT VAMPIRE...
...THIRSTING FOR THEIR BLOOD.

...MY CONSIDERED OPINION THAT IF YOU CATCH THIS "BAT-MAN," YOU CATCH YOUR KILLER.
HEAVENS, TOLLIVER--
--I HOPE YOUR POLICE CAN STOP THIS... THIS NOSFERATU!
TOLLIVER, SURELY THESE KILLINGS ARE THE WORK OF A SICK MAN, NOT SOME FANTASTIC CREATURE!
MADMAN OR MONSTER, WAYNE...
...THE "BAT-MAN" IS OUR KILLER... AND WE WILL CATCH HIM!
SIGH I FEEL SAFER ALREADY, COMMISSIONER.
AHEM ACTUALLY, WE'RE NOT CONVINCED THAT THERE'S ANY CONNEC--
NOW WHERE DID BRUCE GET OFF TO?
WHERE INDEED?
Children Cry FOR HELFER'S GASTORIA
MARK MY WORDS, GENTLEMEN, SO LONG AS I AM THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE, LUNATICS WILL NOT WALK THE STREETS OF GOTHAM WITH IMPUNITY!
666
I have found her.
Again.

I had thought myself rid of her mockery. Many times I had cut the laughter from her throat...
...and yet, still she taunts me. As in London, she proves deucedly difficult to kill.
40 WEST END בשר כשר MEAT MARKET
No matter...
...'Tis easy work...
...and a task I very much enjoy.
FREEMAN & BEATTY FANCY GOODS 547
Oh, yes.

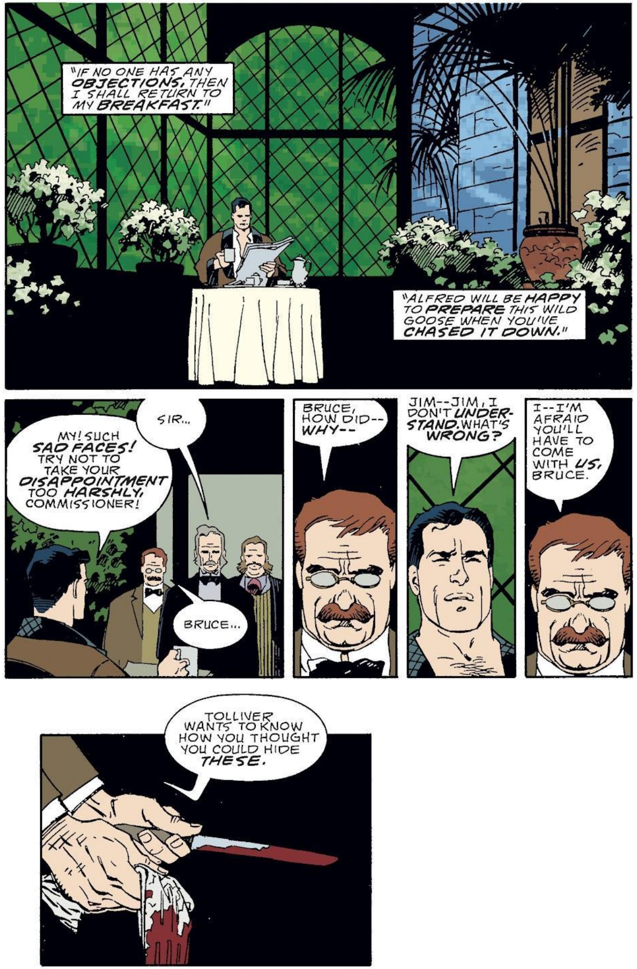

1,000,000 Circulation
The Gotham Guardian
FINAL
JACK THE RIPPER IN GOTHAM?
GHASTLY MURDERS MIRROR LONDON SLAYINGS!
Commissioner Tolliver Reveals Ripper May Be Responsible For At Least Three Other Murders Over Past Two Months
Tolliver

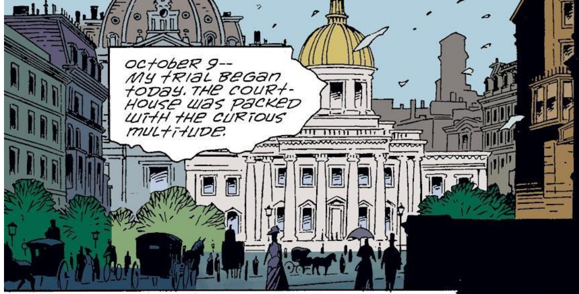

SEPTEMBER 2 -- I can't help but WONDER if I have made the right decision--undertaking my MISSION in THIS manner. Certainly, I've struck FEAR in the heart of the criminal element...
...and yet, to judge by the conversation of last night's PARTYGOERS, Gotham's INNOCENTS know not what to make of me, EITHER.
THAT is a mark of SUCCESS. To the people of GOTHAM, the BAT-MAN is a FIGURE OF MYSTERY.
EVENING, ALFRED. IS BRUCE...?
AH, INSPECTOR GORDON.
I'M AFRAID MASTER WAYNE IS... AWAY THIS EVENING.
BUSINESS? HEH! HE'S OUT CATTIN' ABOUT GOTHAM, I'D WAGER! WELL, TELL BRUCE I'M SORRY I MISSED 'IM AGAIN, ALFRED.
CERTAINLY. GOOD NIGHT, GENTLEMEN.
AWAY...
... AND DOING WHAT, I WONDER?"
Stopping the RIPPER would help ease people's FEAR of the Bat-man--but do I even WANT...

NO! NOOOO!!
OHGODNO!!! HELPMEPLEASEHEL--
HUSH NOW, MY PRETTY...
THIS WON'T TAKE BUT A SECOND...
DAMN!
DAMN!
Dear Boss,
Helloo To AM3RICA,
Hello to Gotham City,
truly the Streets are
Paved in Gold. Though
they'll run R3D 'fore
I'm thru. MY KNIF3 is
as Sharp as ever and
NO WHOR3 is safe
even if she don't
take money--HA HA,
yours Truly,
Jack The Ripper
1
Inspector Gordon
12 middle st.
Gotham City

NOW THE POSTCARDS.
EVERY TURN ON THIS BLOODY CASE LEADS NOWHERE... IT'S A MOUNTAIN OF CONFLICTING TESTIMONY AND INSUB-STANTIAL EVIDENCE.
NO WITNESSES. NO LEADS. NO HOPE.
IT'S OVER, GORDON.
SIR? I DIDN'T REALIZE YOU WERE STILL--
DIDN'T YOU HEAR ME, GORDON? WE HAVE OUR MAN!
GOT HIS FILE A SHORT WHILE AGO... TELLS US EVERYTHING WE NEED TO KNOW.
GET YOUR COAT ON, JIM.

"WE'RE OFF TO WAYNE MANOR.
"LET'S FIND OUT HOW YOUR FRIEND BRUCE SPENDS HIS NIGHTS..."
...REALLY MOST IRREGULAR, SIR...
AND EXACTLY WHAT IS THIS ABOUT, INSPECTOR?
I'M AFRAID THAT THE COMMISSIONER HAS FASTENED ON THE ABSURD NOTION THAT YOU'RE OUR RIPPER, BRUCE.
SEARCH EVERYTHING, MEN!
=SIGH= BY ALL MEANS, GENTLEMEN-- SEARCH TO YOUR HEART'S CONTENT! I'VE NOTHING TO HIDE!
=HARRUMPH= NOTHING, SIR?
AH. IF YOU'RE REFERRING TO MY... EVENING CLOTHES, ALFRED...
...MY UNIFORM AND EQUIPMENT HAVE BEEN MOVED TO A SAFE PLACE.
QUITE SAFE.





The indictments against me for the murders of the women were read. Uncle Jake, acting as my counsel, assures me that the state's case is weak and guarantees me a speedy acquittal.

We heard the opening remarks by Gotham's esteemed District Attorney. Within ten minutes, I was called a "murderous monster" four times and a "blood-lusting maniac" twice. I had thought Harvey and I were **friends**.

October 12--

The prosecution trotted out more of their "witnesses." One woman even claimed to have **seen** me, knife in hand, running from the scene of a murder. It is obvious to all that the woman drinks heavily and views everything through a rum-soaked haze. Even the jury must realize this.

I am beginning to be concerned with Gotham's and Tolliver's desperate hunger for a scapegoat. When I am acquitted, I must find the Ripper **posthaste**.

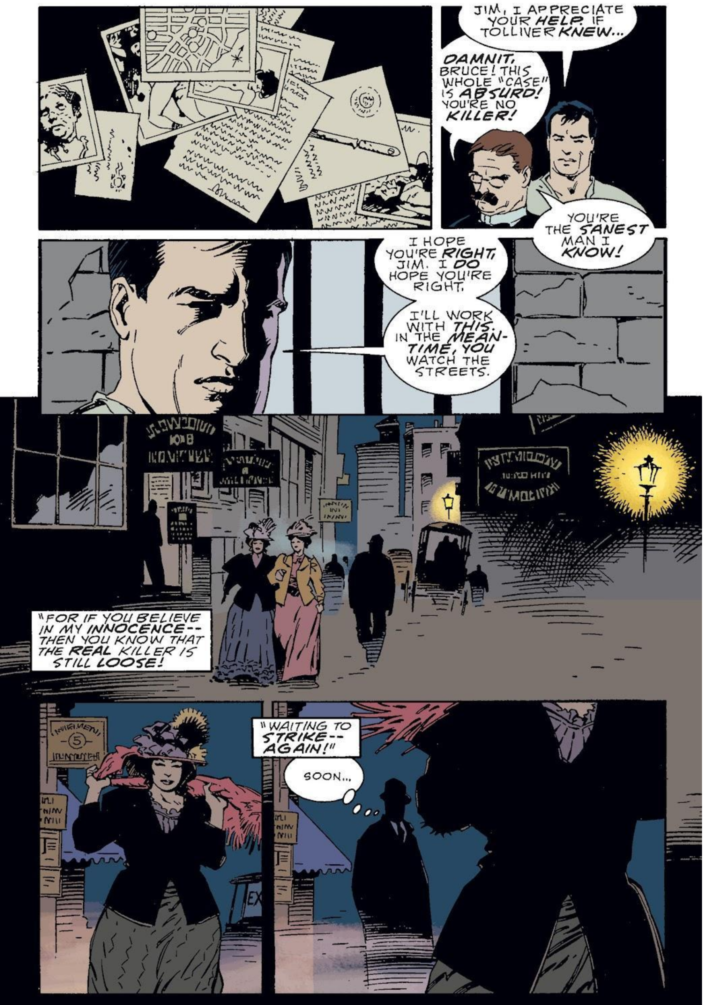
October 15--

Tolliver took the stand to present the police department's case. He outlined the London Ripper murders and pointed up the similarities. While it is obvious even to a fatuous idiot like Tolliver that the killings **are** the work of the same hand, my "guilt" is "established" by the revelation that I was in London at the time of the original Ripper slayings--and that I have trouble accounting for my **nights**.

The Ripper is said to have medical training --and so my relationship with my father the **doctor** is invoked.

October 17--
The prosecution and defense both rested today. Dent eloquently urged the jury to find me GUILTY. Uncle Jake, however, passionately hammered away at the prosecution's shaky case, pointing out the coincidences and inconsistencies and accusing Tolliver of a VENDETTA.
He has inspired me with new confidence.
SIR--MIGHT IT NOT BE WISE TO REVEAL HOW YOU REALLY SPEND YOUR EVENINGS?
I HAVE CONSIDERED IT, OLD FRIEND --BUT NO.
THE GENERAL PUBLIC KNOWS LITTLE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE RIPPER AND THE BAT-MAN.
I'M AFRAID THAT THAT CONFESSION WOULD BE SEEN AS AN ADMISSION OF MY GUILT... OR MY INSANITY.
BESIDES-- THEY HAVE NO CASE.
1,000,000 Circulation
The Gotham Guardian
FINAL
BRUCE WAYNE IS JACK THE RIPPER!
MILLIONAIRE SENTENCED TO HANG
Killer
Jury Finds Socialite Guilty in Record Deliberation

ARKHAM ASYLUM.
HOLDING WAYNE HERE SEEMS A LITTLE EXTREME, WARDEN BLACKWELL.
HE'S A CONVICTED MAD DOG KILLER, GORDON. I'VE READ ABOUT HIS VICTIMS.
THIS IS MORE THAN HE DESERVES.
YES, THE PATENTED, THERAPEUTIC ARKHAM COMPASSION ...YOU MAY GO NOW, BLACKWELL.
HELLO, BRUCE.
INSPECTOR.
DO YOU HAVE IT?
YES. EVERYTHING WE HAVE ON THE RIPPER, FILCHED FROM TOLLIVER.
WHAT YOU MAY FIND, I DON'T KNOW.
"BUT I HOPE TO GOD THERE'S SOMETHING."
POLICE



JIM, I APPRECIATE YOUR HELP. IF TOLLIVER KNEW...
DAMNIT, BRUCE! THIS WHOLE "CASE" IS ABSURD! YOU'RE NO KILLER!
YOU'RE THE SANEST MAN I KNOW!
I HOPE YOU'RE RIGHT, JIM. I DO HOPE YOU'RE RIGHT.
I'LL WORK WITH THIS. IN THE MEAN-TIME, YOU WATCH THE STREETS.
"FOR IF YOU BELIEVE IN MY INNOCENCE-- THEN YOU KNOW THAT THE REAL KILLER IS STILL LOOSE!
"WAITING TO STRIKE-- AGAIN!"
SOON...

October 21--
My only hope of survival lies in my solving crimes from my cell.... that two police forces could not.
I have surrounded myself with every scrap of evidence from two sides of the Atlantic, with newspaper reports, and even with some of my father's old medical texts so as to better understand the Ripper's handiwork.
I must find an answer.
October 23--
It is a puzzle with a million pieces and no clue to the finished picture. I consider myself a trained detective-- I have studied with the finest minds of my time-- and now must apply all of that learned wisdom towards a solution.
It is either that...or the gallows.
October 26--
Jake stopped by with terrible news. My appeal was denied. The powers that be in Gotham, anxious to set this whole mess behind them, are content that they have found their killer.
Jake is crushed. He has worked so hard on my behalf. I must redouble my efforts. I hang in five days.
October 29--
If only I had paid more attention to the Ripper cases while actually in London. Such a wretched lapse...
...for someone in my chosen profession.
The Gotham killings are a perfect match for the Whitechapel murders of a year ago. The methods of attack, dissection, and disposal are all identical, executed with a surgeon's finesse. The taunting letters sent by the Ripper to the British bobbies match those sent to Gordon right down to the dots on the "i"s. It is clearly the work of the same man-- but who? And why has he framed me so perfectly?
I do not know.
I do not know.

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"OF COURSE."
MASTER BRUCE? ARE YOU THERE, SIR?
ONLY BRIEFLY, ALFRED. I'VE OPENED THE DOOR. I NEED YOUR HELP. I'M LEAVING.
THANK HEAVENS. YOU KNOW HOW I'VE PLEADED WITH YOU--
--TO BREAK THE LAW THAT PUT ME HERE? PERHAPS I'VE NOT BEEN THINKING CLEARLY-- BUT THE LAW, ALFRED, IS WHAT I'VE SWORN TO UPHOLD.
I COULDN'T BETRAY IT-- NOR BETRAY GORDON AND ALL HE'S DONE FOR ME.
BUT I NOW KNOW THE SITUATION IS MORE CHILLING THAN I'D EVER IMAGINED.
STAY QUIET, ALFRED, AND PRAY THIS CRUDE DECEPTION WORKS.
"I MUST GO. THERE'S A MADMAN LOOSE IN MY CITY."

I've kept my ears shut to her laughter time and again as I've waited. If I had... dealt with her as before, it would have ruined the case against Wayne.
But he swings at dawn.
I need wait no longer.
By the time they discover her, Wayne will be twisting in the breeze--and I'll be long gone. Long...
DRUG BROKER JOHN PEAKE
OH, MY GOD.

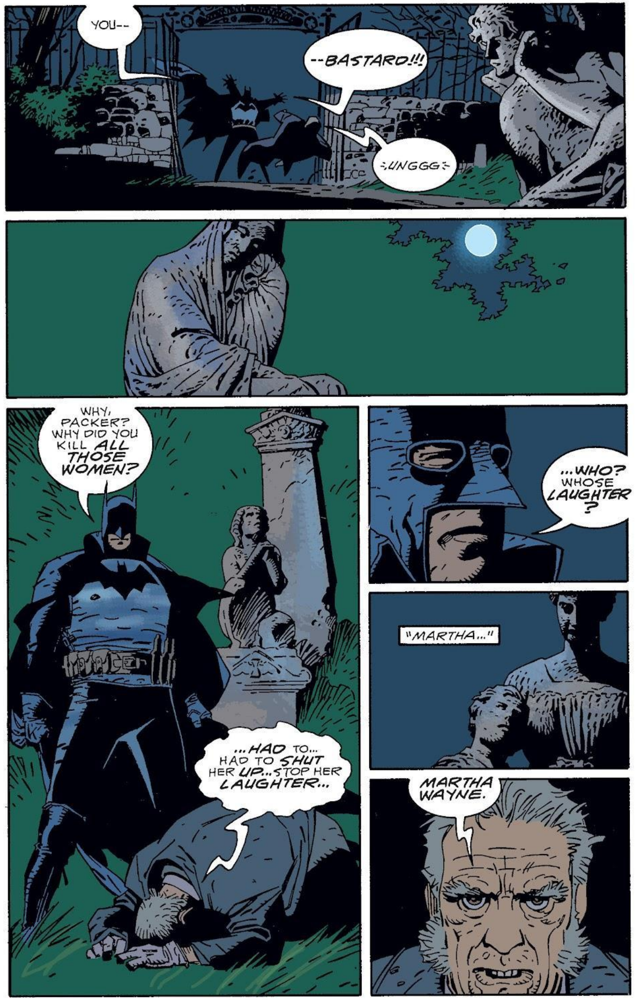
NO!
NO.
NO.
NO.
NO.
PIER 4
GOTHAM CENTRAL
WHERE AHUHWHERE AHUHWHERE AHUH...

RUN.
WONDER
RAT
DESTROY
LEAVE ME ALONE!
LEAVE ME ALONE!
GET...
AWAY!!

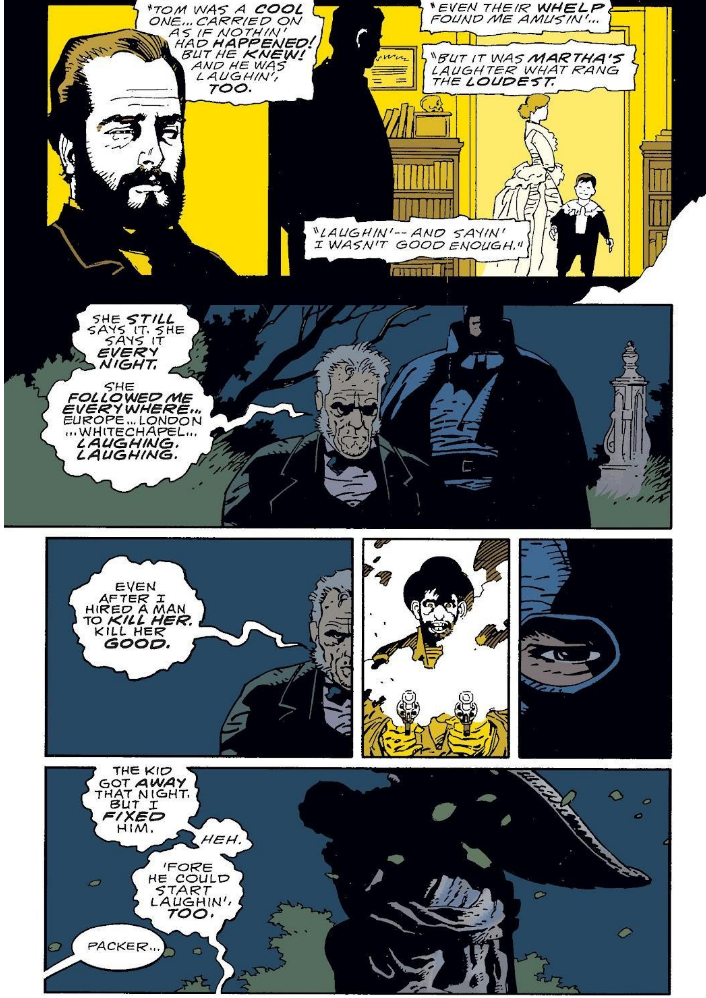
GO AHEAD. RUN. YOU WILL **NOT** GET AWAY.

THAT'S IT, LADIES, FASTER!
FASTER --EE- YAAH!

IT'S OVER...
...YOU'RE NOT GOING ANY-WHERE--
--JACOB PACKER!!!


YOU--
--BASTARD!!!
UNGGG
WHY, PACKER? WHY DID YOU KILL ALL THOSE WOMEN?
...HAD TO... HAD TO SHUT HER UP...STOP HER LAUGHTER...
...WHO? WHOSE LAUGHTER?
"MARTHA..."
MARTHA WAYNE.

"MARTHA...
"DURIN' THE WAR, I ASSISTED A DOCTOR NAME OF THOMAS WAYNE. AFTERWARDS, HE TRIED TO INTRODUCE ME INTO HIS HIGH-FALOOTIN' SOCIETY.
"ME-- A SCRUFFY FARMER'S KID FROM PENNSYLVANIA.
"TOM WAS ALWAYS SO GENEROUS-- PAID MY WAY TO MEDICAL SCHOOL. WHEN I FLUNKED OUT, HE GOT ME INTO LAW SCHOOL-- SAID A MAN NEEDED A PROFESSION.
"ARROGANT BASTARD.
"I WANTED FOR NOTHIN'. EVEN WHEN I GRADUATED BOTTOM OF THE CLASS, TOM ARRANGED ENOUGH BUSINESS TO PUSH ME INTO A THRIVIN' PRACTICE. MADE ME THE FAMILY SOLICITOR, TOO.
"I HAD EVERYTHIN' I WANTED... EXCEPT MARTHA. I THOUGHT SHE WAS THE PUREST, MOST BEAUTIFUL GIRL EVER.
"I LOVED HER.
"TOM HAD EVERYTHING. I DESERVED ONE THING OF MY VERY OWN. JUST ONE. MARTHA.
"BUT WHEN I CONFESSED MY DEVOTION, SHE... SHE LAUGHED AT ME. REJECTED AND MOCKED ME.
"HER MOCKERY HUMILIATED ME. HAUNTED ME. IT WAS A LONG SPELL 'FORE I FIGGERED OUT HOW TO HANDLE IT...

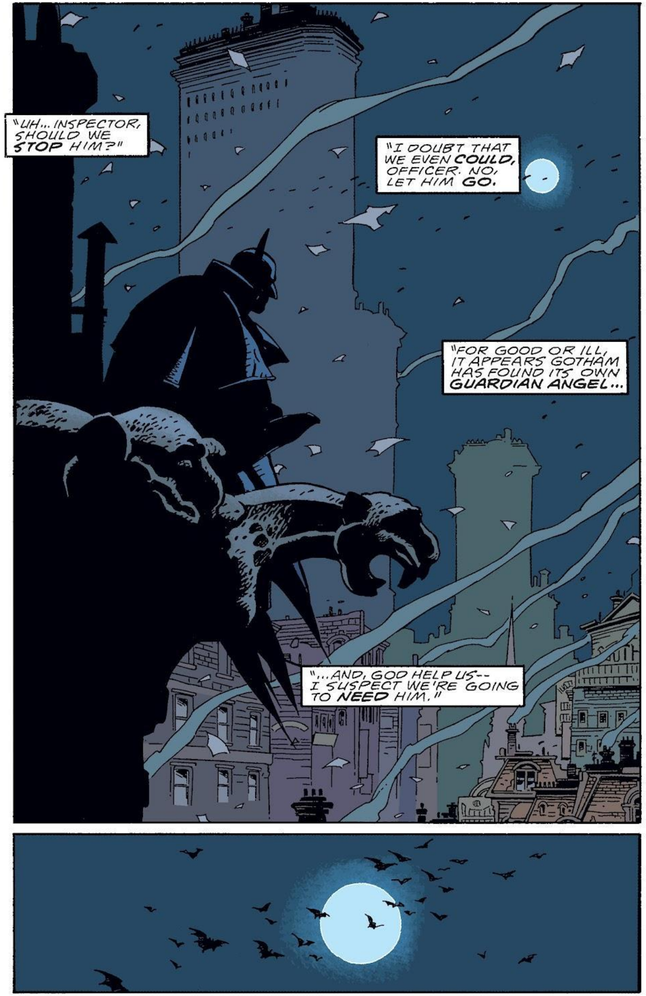

"TOM WAS A COOL ONE... CARRIED ON AS IF NOTHIN' HAD HAPPENED! BUT HE KNEW! AND HE WAS LAUGHIN', TOO.
"EVEN THEIR WHELP FOUND ME AMUSIN'...
"BUT IT WAS MARTHA'S LAUGHTER WHAT RANG THE LOUDEST.
"LAUGHIN'-- AND SAYIN' I WASN'T GOOD ENOUGH."
SHE STILL SAYS IT. SHE SAYS IT EVERY NIGHT.
SHE FOLLOWED ME EVERYWHERE... EUROPE... LONDON ...WHITECHAPEL... LAUGHING. LAUGHING.
EVEN AFTER I HIRED A MAN TO KILL HER. KILL HER GOOD.
THE KID GOT AWAY THAT NIGHT. BUT I FIXED HIM.
HEH.
'FORE HE COULD START LAUGHIN', TOO.
PACKER...

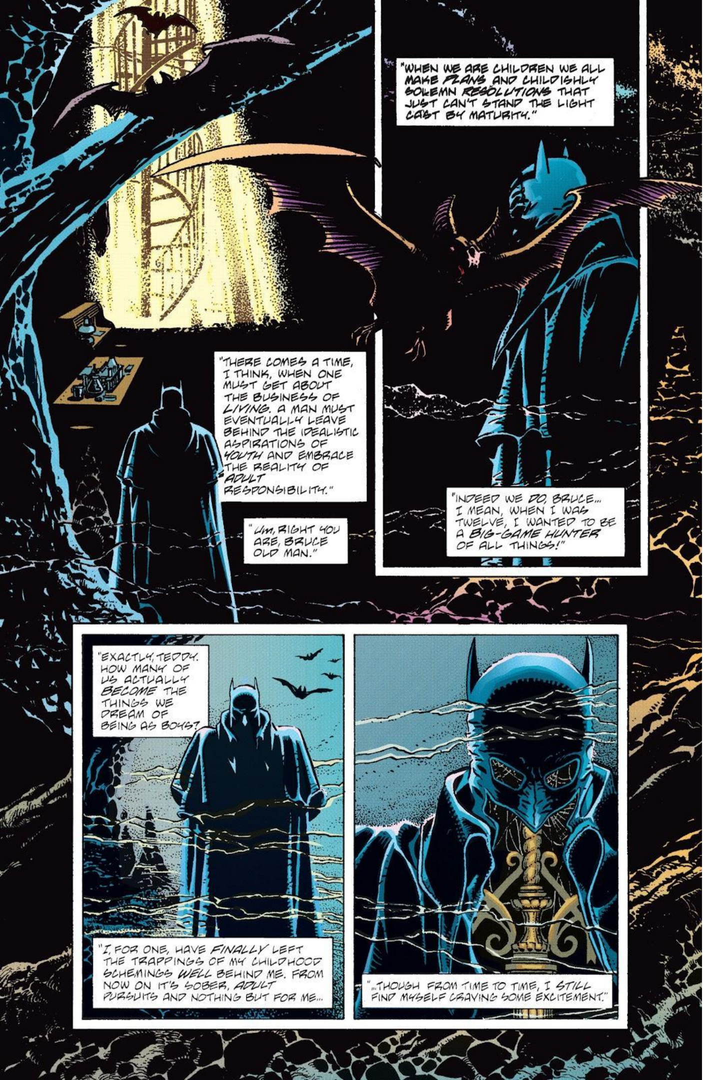
...I'M NOT LAUGHING.
BRUCE...?
BUH- BRUCE! DIDN'T... DIDN'T KNOW! BRUCE!
YOU KILLED MY PARENTS. YOU KILLED THOSE WOMEN. AND YOU-- YOU FRAMED ME FOR YOUR CRIMES! NOW I-- I SHOULD KILL YOU!
YES... YES...

KILL ME.
STOP!
HOLD IT RIGHT THERE!
WHAT'S GOING ON?
THIS MAN IS YOUR RIPPER, GORDON--
--THE MAN WHO REALLY SLAUGHTERED THOSE POOR WOMEN.
HIS NAME IS JACOB PACKER.
WAYNE
WHAT? AND JUST WHO ARE YOU?
IT DOESN'T MATTER.
THIS IS YOUR KILLER. ARREST HIM.

'STRUE... I'M YOUR MAN... KILLED THE WOMEN ...HERE AND IN LONDON...
...EVEN KILLED A COUPLE O' WHORES IN PARIS WHAT NO ONE EVER CONNECTED...
...THEN FRAMED WAYNE.
...ALL THAT BLOOD... I'VE BEEN VERY BAD.
I SEE.
ALL RIGHT. BOTH OF YOU ARE COMING WITH US.
YES, INDEEDIE... VERY, VERY BAD...
...HEH, HEH... YOURS TRULY...
AAARRGHH
JACK THE RIPPER!

--UKKK--
THANK YOU, INSPECTOR.
YOU! WHAT WAS THIS ALL ABOUT? WHY WAS HE KILLING ALL THOSE WOMEN?
WHO TRULY UNDERSTANDS THE ACTIONS OF A MADMAN, INSPECTOR?
YOU'VE ENOUGH EVIDENCE NOW TO RELEASE WAYNE?
YES... BUT YOU --?
I AM LEAVING.


"UH... INSPECTOR, SHOULD WE STOP HIM?"
"I DOUBT THAT WE EVEN COULD, OFFICER. NO, LET HIM GO.
"FOR GOOD OR ILL, IT APPEARS GOTHAM HAS FOUND ITS OWN GUARDIAN ANGEL...
"...AND, GOD HELP US-- I SUSPECT WE'RE GOING TO NEED HIM."


"THERE COMES A TIME, I THINK, WHEN ONE MUST GET ABOUT THE BUSINESS OF LIVING. A MAN MUST EVENTUALLY LEAVE BEHIND THE IDEALISTIC ASPIRATIONS OF YOUTH AND EMBRACE THE REALITY OF ADULT RESPONSIBILITY."
"UM, RIGHT YOU ARE, BRUCE OLD MAN."
"WHEN WE ARE CHILDREN WE ALL MAKE PLANS AND CHILDISHLY SOLEMN RESOLUTIONS THAT JUST CAN'T STAND THE LIGHT CAST BY MATURITY."
"INDEED WE DO, BRUCE... I MEAN, WHEN I WAS TWELVE, I WANTED TO BE A BIG-GAME HUNTER OF ALL THINGS!"
"EXACTLY, TEDDY. HOW MANY OF US ACTUALLY BECOME THE THINGS WE DREAM OF BEING AS BOYS?
"I, FOR ONE, HAVE FINALLY LEFT THE TRAPPINGS OF MY CHILDHOOD SCHEMINGS WELL BEHIND ME. FROM NOW ON IT'S SOBER, ADULT PURSUITS AND NOTHING BUT FOR ME...
"...THOUGH FROM TIME TO TIME, I STILL FIND MYSELF CRAVING SOME EXCITEMENT."

EXCITEMENT, eh? WELL, THAT EXPLAINS THIS LITTLE ESCAPADE.
THERE SEEMS NOTHING SOBER OR ADULT ABOUT WATCHING TWO OVERGROWN MEN BEAT THE BEJEEZUS OUT OF EACH OTHER.
PARTICULARLY WHEN THE FELLOW YOU BET ON IS LOSING, eh?

BESIDES, TEDDY, ISN'T THIS THE SORT OF THING WE RICH YOUNG WASTRELS ARE EXPECTED TO PURSUE WHEN WE BECOME ADULTS?!
I GUESS YOU'RE RI-DAMNATION, HE'S DOWN FOR GOOD!!
SETTLE DOWN, LAD, IT'S ONLY MONEY... WE'VE PLENTY OF THAT.
I KNOW, BUT IT'S THE PRINCIPLE OF THE THING...
I HAD A RELIABLE TIP ON THAT HAPLESS BRUTE.
I THINK I SMELL AN ARRANGEMENT!
THIS WAS NO FAIR FIGHT, YOU HOOLIGANS! THIS MATCH WAS FIXED!
TEDDY...
FIXED, eh? THEN AN HONEST LAD LIKE YERSELF SHOULD HAVE NO TROUBLE DEALING WITH DEXTER HERE... IN A FAIR FIGHT!
NOBODY CALLS ME A CHEAT!
WHAT SAY, MISTER FAIR PLAY, YOU GAME?
YES, YES... KILL THE LITTLE SWELL!
MY MONEY'S ON DEXTER!
KNOCK 'IM ON HIS DUFF, DEX!
BRING HIM DOWN!
MY FRIEND IS UNINTERESTED IN YOUR OFFER, I THINK... MAY I FIGHT IN HIS PLACE?

WELL, YER A BIT MORE OF A CHALLENGE THAN YER PLUMP PALLY THERE... NOT MUCH MORE, BUT DEX'LL BE MORE'N HAPPY TO TAKE YA ON.
KILL 'EM!!
BRUCE! NO!!
DON'T WORRY, TED OLD MAN-- TRUST ME...
...AND BET HEAVILY ON ME.
GENNAMEN... HAVE AT 'EM!!
GREAT DAY, LOOK AT THAT!!

HOW ON EARTH DID YOU DO THAT, BRUCE... HE WAS A MONSTER!
OH, SOMETHING I PICKED UP IN MY YOUTHFUL WANDERINGS, I IMAGINE.
IN-DEED! WELL, YOU SHOWED THEM WHAT FOR--AND WE ARE SIXTEEN HUNDRED DOLLARS RICHER!
WHICH WE WILL NEVER NEED... MIGHT I SUGGEST A DONATION TO MISS MADISON'S ORPHAN RELIEF FUND?
AH YES, THE LOVELY MISS MADISON. I DO WONDER WHAT YOUR BELOVED FIANCÉE WOULD MAKE OF THAT RATHER... MASCULINE DISPLAY BACK THERE...
JULIE? I DOUBT THAT SHE'D BELIEVE IT IF SHE WITNESSED IT.
SHE IS DEVOTED TO ME, THOUGH I THINK SHE OCCASIONALLY FINDS ME A BIT... STAID...
"...I OFTEN SUSPECT THAT JULIE MAY BE ATTRACTED TO A MORE DASHING SORT OF FELLOW..."
"I AM TELLING YOU, MADDY... I HAVE MET THE BAT-MAN!"

"JULIE! HONESTLY, THE TAILS YOU SPIN!"
"THIS IS THE TRUTH, MADDY... HE SAVED ME FROM SURE DEATH NOT THREE MONTHS AGO.
"NURSE BARSHOW, DOCTOR GILLMORE AND I WERE RETURNING FROM THE WELFARE CLINIC THAT NIGHT...
"...WE KNEW THAT IT WAS UNWISE TO TRAVEL THOSE STREETS AFTER DARK, BUT WE WERE LATER THAN WE PLANNED AND HANSOMS ARE BLESSEDLY DIFFICULT TO FIND WHEN YOU REALLY NEED ONE...
"WE WERE SO INTENT ON SURVIVING OUR TREK, THAT WE DIDN'T EVEN SEE THE BANDITS 'TIL THEY WERE UPON US!
"I DON'T THINK I NEED TELL YOU EXACTLY WHAT THEY HAD IN MIND.
"DOCTOR GILLMORE WAS VERY GALLANT...
"...BUT SERIOUSLY OVERMATCHED. THINGS LOOKED DARK...
"...UNTIL HE ARRIVED! OH, MADDY, HE WAS MAGNIFICENT!
"HE WAS A DARK, BROODING PRESENCE--LIKE NOTHING I'VE EVER ENCOUNTERED! BUT AGAINST ALL LOGIC I SUDDENLY FELT... SAFE!

"...IT WAS BRUTAL, YET SOMEHOW... FASCINATING...
"HE DID NOT SPEAK A WORD BEFORE HE LEAPT TO BATTLE...
"...HIS ACTIONS WERE SO PRECISE, SO DELIBERATE, IT ALL SEEMED ALMOST BALLETIC.
"I TRIED TO CALL OUT TO HIM... BUT SHOCK HAD STOLEN MY VOICE!
"THANKFULLY, NO WARNING WAS NECESSARY-- SOMEHOW HE JUST KNEW!"

"BEFORE WE KNEW IT...
"...IT WAS OVER.
"I GATHERED MY NERVE AND CALLED OUT TO OUR SAVIOUR.
"PERHAPS HE WAS AFRAID I'D SEE HIS REAL FACE, OR MAYBE JUST SHY, BUT HE WAS CAREFUL NOT TO MEET MY GAZE.
"WITH A HUSKILY WHISPERED 'GOOD-BYE,' HE WAS GONE.
"IT WAS SO UNREAL... SO DREAM-LIKE! SIMPLY AMAZING!"

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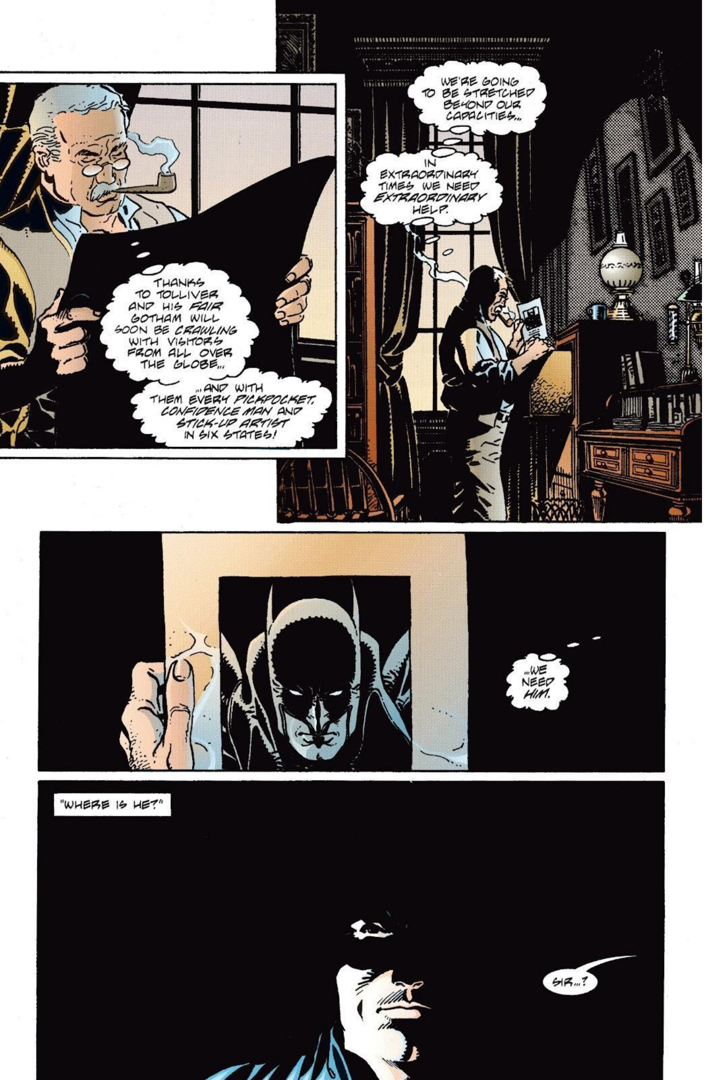
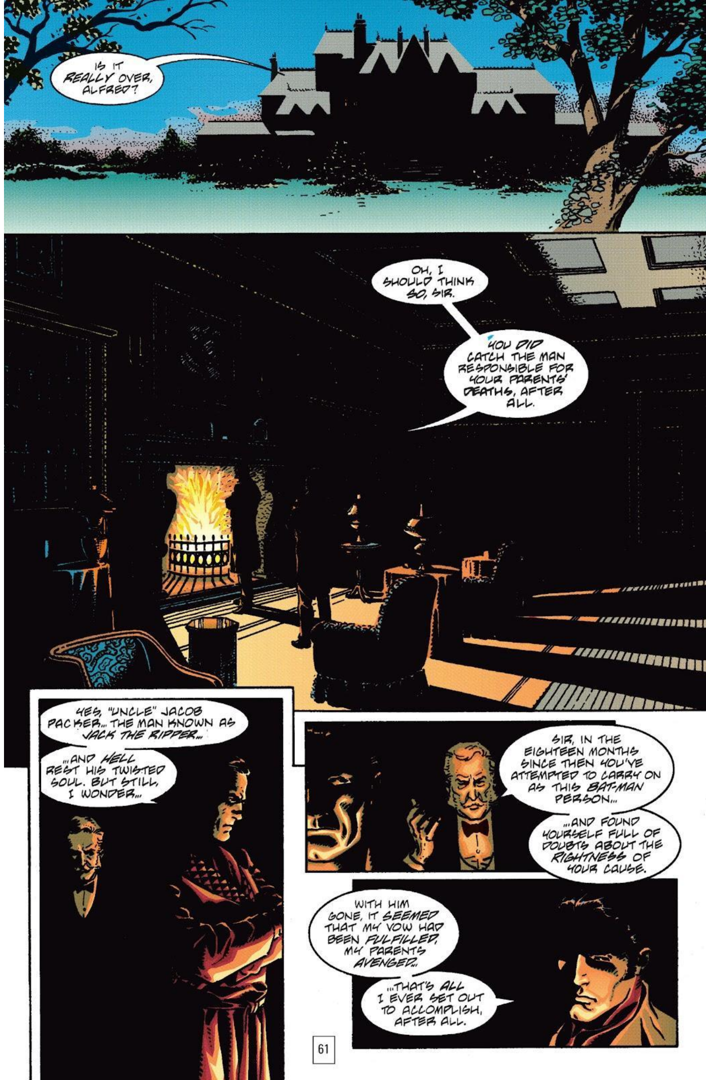
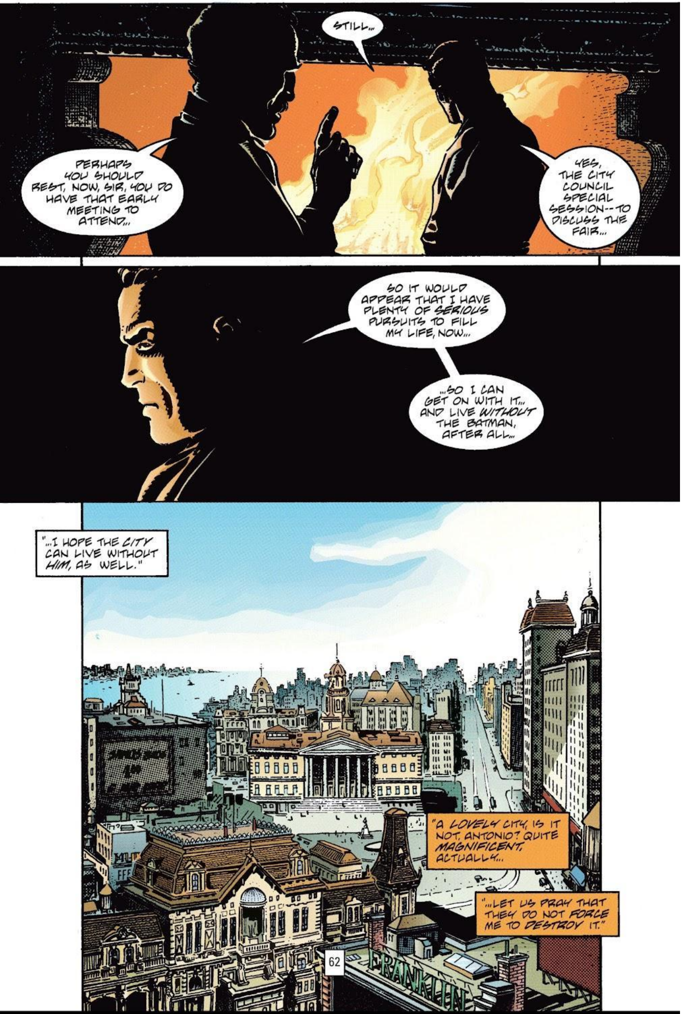
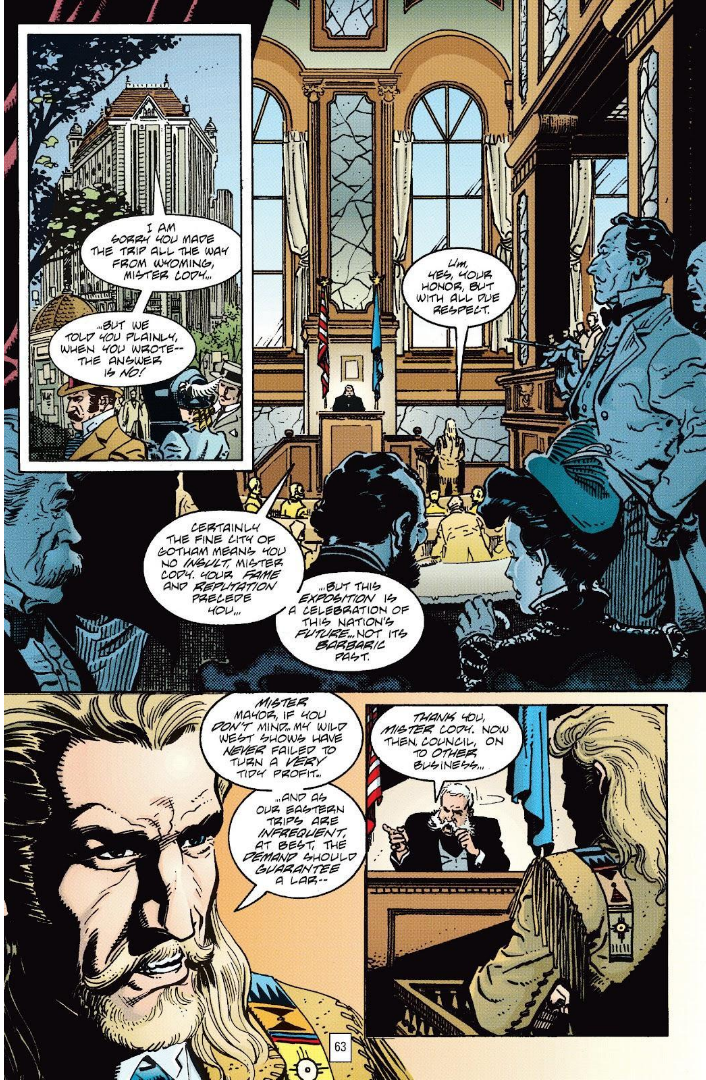


THANKS TO TOLLIVER AND HIS *FAIR* GOTHAM WILL SOON BE *CRAWLING* WITH VISITORS FROM ALL OVER THE GLOBE...
...AND WITH THEM EVERY *PICKPOCKET*, *CONFIDENCE MAN* AND *STICK-UP ARTIST* IN SIX STATES!
WE'RE GOING TO BE STRETCHED BEYOND OUR CAPACITIES...
IN EXTRAORDINARY TIMES WE NEED *EXTRAORDINARY* HELP.
...WE NEED *HIM*.
"WHERE IS HE?"
SIR...?



IS IT *REALLY* OVER, ALFRED?
OH, I SHOULD THINK *SO*, SIR.
YOU DID CATCH THE MAN RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR PARENTS' DEATHS, AFTER ALL.
YES, "UNCLE" JACOB PACKER... THE MAN KNOWN AS *JACK THE RIPPER*...
...AND *HELL* REST HIS TWISTED SOUL. BUT STILL, I WONDER...
SIR, IN THE EIGHTEEN MONTHS SINCE THEN YOU'VE ATTEMPTED TO CARRY ON AS THIS *BAT-MAN* PERSON...
...AND FOUND YOURSELF FULL OF DOUBTS ABOUT THE *RIGHTNESS* OF YOUR CAUSE.
WITH HIM GONE, IT *SEEMED* THAT MY VOW HAD BEEN *FULFILLED*, MY PARENTS *AVENGED*...
...THAT'S *ALL* I EVER SET OUT TO ACCOMPLISH, AFTER ALL.





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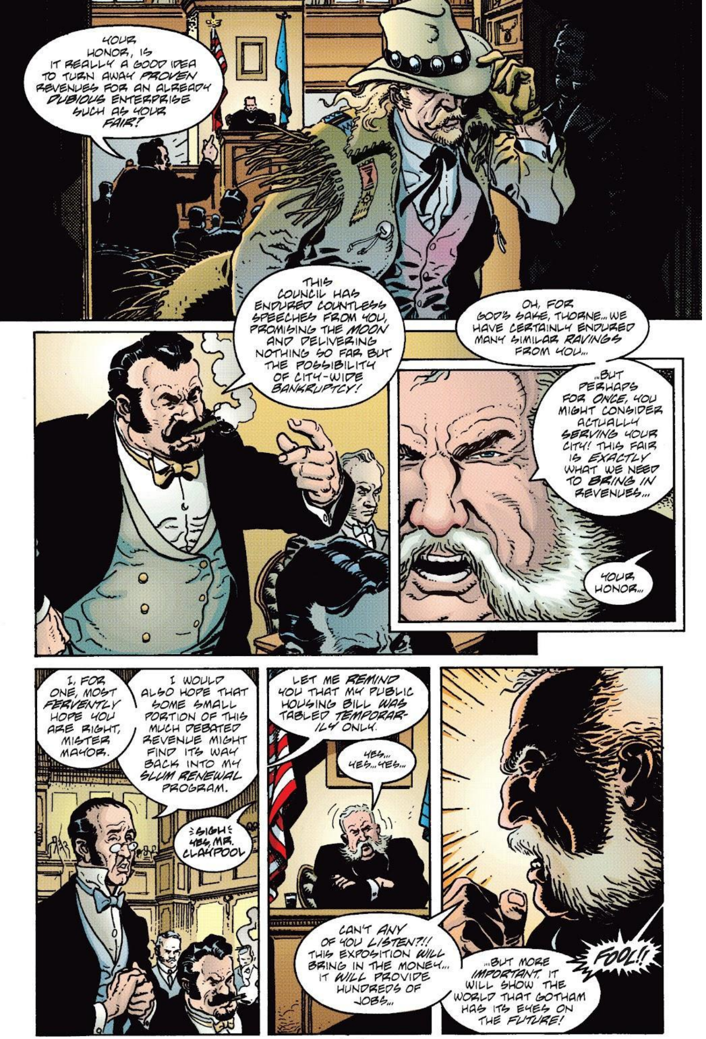
YOUR HONOR, IS IT REALLY A GOOD IDEA TO TURN AWAY PROVEN REVENUES FOR AN ALREADY DUBIOUS ENTERPRISE SUCH AS YOUR FAIR?
THIS COUNCIL HAS ENDURED COUNTLESS SPEECHES FROM YOU, PROMISING THE MOON AND DELIVERING NOTHING SO FAR BUT THE POSSIBILITY OF CITY-WIDE BANKRUPTCY!
OH, FOR GOD'S SAKE, THORNE... WE HAVE CERTAINLY ENDURED MANY SIMILAR RAVINGS FROM YOU...
...BUT PERHAPS FOR ONCE, YOU MIGHT CONSIDER ACTUALLY SERVING YOUR CITY! THIS FAIR IS EXACTLY WHAT WE NEED TO BRING IN REVENUES...
YOUR HONOR...
I, FOR ONE, MOST FERVENTLY HOPE YOU ARE RIGHT, MISTER MAYOR.
I WOULD ALSO HOPE THAT SOME SMALL PORTION OF THIS MUCH DEBATED REVENUE MIGHT FIND ITS WAY BACK INTO MY SLUM RENEWAL PROGRAM.
SIGH YES, MR. CLAYPOOL
LET ME REMIND YOU THAT MY PUBLIC HOUSING BILL WAS TABLED TEMPORARILY ONLY.
YES... YES... YES...
CAN'T ANY OF YOU LISTEN?!! THIS EXPOSITION WILL BRING IN THE MONEY... IT WILL PROVIDE HUNDREDS OF JOBS...
...BUT MORE IMPORTANT, IT WILL SHOW THE WORLD THAT GOTHAM HAS ITS EYES ON THE FUTURE!
FOOL!!

YOU PEOPLE KNOW NOTHING ABOUT THE FUTURE! YOU CELEBRATE NOTHING BUT INFANTILE DAYDREAMS!!
THIS FUTURE YOU RUSH TO EMBRACE IS A SHAM!
LOOK AT HIM, WILL YOU!
WHO'S HE THINK HE IS?
HOW DID HE COME THROUGH THOSE WINDOWS! WE'RE ON THE NINTH FLOOR!
YOU IDIOTS DREAM OF ENGINES THAT BEFOUL THE AIR AND FACTORIES THAT RUIN YOUR WATERWAYS...
...AND YOU CALL IT... PROGRESS! FOOLS!
WH- WHO ARE Y-YOU?!

I AM ALEXANDRE LeROI... I AM THE MASTER OF YOUR FUTURE.
I AM THE MAN OF... TOMORROW!
I BRING YOU MY TERMS. NAME ME MASTER OF YOUR FAIR... OF YOUR CITY...
...AND THIS CITY IS SAVED.
IGNORE ME AND I SHALL STRIKE WITH THE FIRE OF THE SUN AND BURN YOU TO THE GROUND!

GET HIM! THE LUNATIC IS THREATENING ME!!
YOU HAVE MY CONDITIONS... CONSIDER THEM CAREFULLY.
I WILL KNOW WHAT YOU DECIDE.
ADIEU.
AFTER HIM! HE CAN'T GET FAR--WE'RE NINE STORIES UP!

IS THIS WHAT WE CAN EXPECT FROM YOUR FAIR, YOUR HONOR? MADMEN THREATENING US IN OUR OWN CHAMBERS?!
DON'T BE RIDICULOUS, RUPERT.
...NO SIGN OF HIM, SIR. DON'T SEE HOW, BUT HE GOT CLEAN AWAY.
ARE YOU GOING TO MEET HIS DEMANDS? SHUT DOWN THE EXPOSITION?
OF COURSE NOT, GORDON! HOW CAN WE TAKE THIS LUNATIC SERIOUSLY?
HOW CAN ONE MAN DO ANYTHING TO THIS CITY?
NO...THE FAIR WILL GO ON.
MARK MY WORDS! IN SIX WEEKS' TIME, THIS CITY WILL CELEBRATE!
AND NO ONE WILL DARE INTERFERE!!
...AND THEY'RE NOT TAKING THIS MAN SERIOUSLY?
WELL, IT IS DIFFICULT TO KNOW WHAT TO MAKE OF HIM.
HE AND HIS THREATS WERE SO OUTLANDISH, SO... WEIRD...
...AND NONE OF US IS EXPERT AT DEALING WITH THAT.
ONLY ONE MAN IS...AND HE'S APPARENTLY GONE.
BAT-MAN.

REALLY, JULIE, I FIND THIS... OBSESSION OF YOURS MOST DISTRESSING.
IF I DIDN'T KNOW BETTER, I'D SUSPECT A ROMANTIC INFATUATION.
BRUCE WAYNE, YOU ARE SUCH A RIDICULOUS... MALE.
AND IN SPITE OF THAT, YOU ARE THE ONLY ONE I HAVE ANY ROMANTIC FEELINGS FOR...
...THIS IS SOMETHING... DIFFERENT.
MY INTEREST IN BATMAN IS MORE A SOCIOLOGICAL ONE.
WE'VE ONLY SEEN A SMALL GLIMMERING OF THE GOOD HE CAN DO...
SOCIO-LOGICAL, eh? WELL, CALL IT WHAT YOU WILL--
IT IS NOT FUNNY.
OUR INNOCENT DAYS ARE OVER, BRUCE. THERE ARE MORE MANIACS LIKE LeROI OUT THERE, JUST WAITING TO PREY ON US.
WE NEED SOMEONE WHO IS PREPARED FOR A MEAN TOMORROW...
...AND WE NEED A CHAMPION FOR TODAY.

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"WELL, I WAS *RIGHT.* IN THE PAST MONTH WE'VE HEARD NOTHING OF THAT *LE-ROY* PERSON...
"...HE *WAS* A CRACKPOT, AFTER ALL, IT APPEARS."

YOU'RE *LATE,* WAYNE. IF YOU'VE NO INTEREST IN THE BUSINESS OF THIS PLANNING COMMITTEE, YOU SHOULD NOT HAVE VOLUNTEERED!
SORRY, SORRY...
NOW THEN... *THIS* IS THE MAIN PAVILION. THE OPENING CEREMONIES WILL TAKE PLACE HERE. AS WILL THE GRAND BALL.
IF YOU'LL FOLLOW ME, WE'LL HEAD OUT AND VIEW THE GROUNDS.
KIOSKS LIKE THAT WILL BE ALL OVER. THEY'LL HAVE MAPS OF THE GROUNDS AND POSTERS OF...
...WHAT IN BLAZES...IS *THAT?!*

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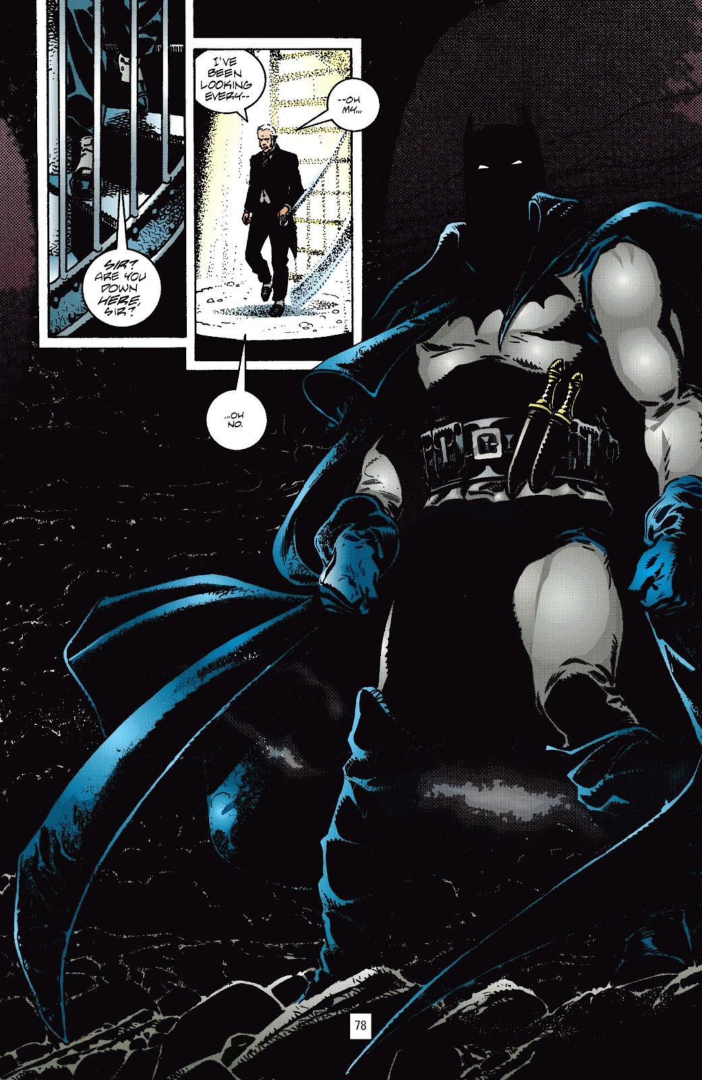
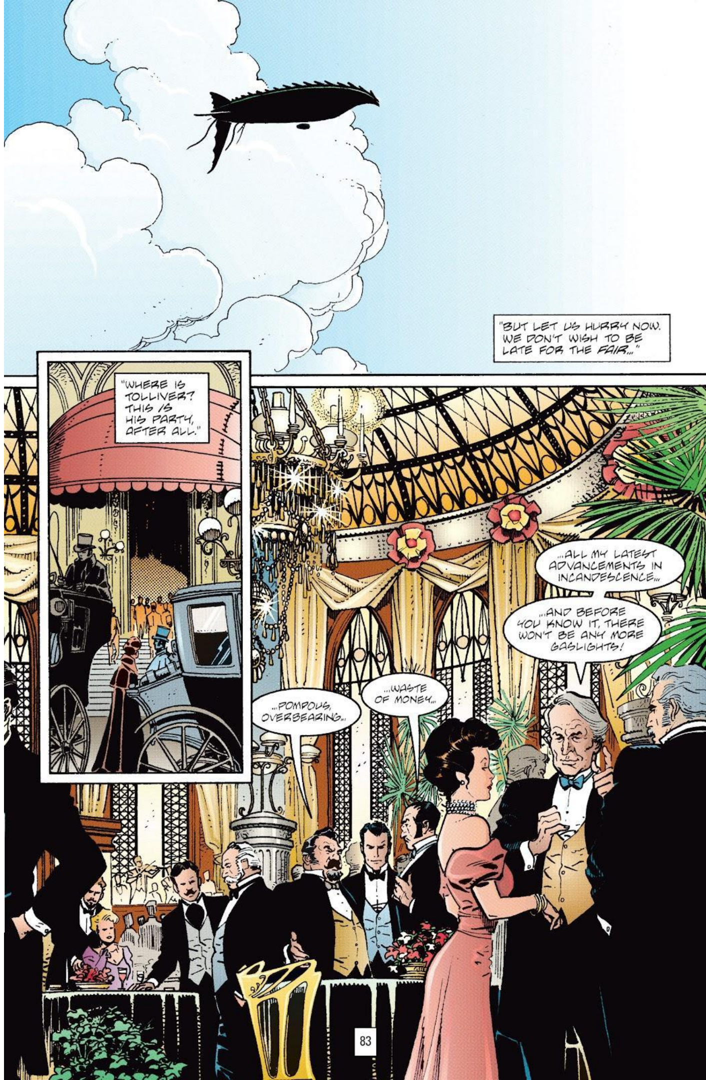

SIR? ARE YOU DOWN HERE, SIR?
I'VE BEEN LOOKING EVERY--
--OH MY...
...OH NO.

1,000,000 Circulation
The Gotham Guardian
FINAL
FAIR OPENS TODAY!
Mayor Presides Over Opening Ceremonies
Mayors Office Denies Threats Against Fair
TOLLIVER IS AN IDIOT! HOW DOES HE EXPECT US TO PROTECT HIS FAIR...?
I'M DREADFULLY CERTAIN THAT LeROI MEANS BUSINESS...
...A VERY NASTY SORT OF BUSINESS, INDEED.
The fair, and the city's finest burn tonight. You must be shown. The Master
...A GORGEOUS--AND FITTING--SORT OF DAY FOR THE OPENING, eh, MARCUS?
SYRUP of PRUNES

IT'S AN OMEN, MARCUS... AN OMEN OF GOOD FORTUNE! MY FAIR AND I ARE DESTINED FOR GREATNESS!
INDEED, SIR.
WHAT CAN GO WRONG ON SUCH A BEAUTIFUL DAY? THERE'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT...
--NOTHING AT ALL--?!!
YOU HAVE UNDERESTIMATED ME AGAIN, FOOL... FOR THE LAST TIME.
AFTER THIS, YOU MUST LEARN TO TAKE ME AT MY WORD!
...LeROI ALWAYS KEEPS HIS WORD!
HE'S CRAZY... GO CALL THE POLICE!
NO!!
80

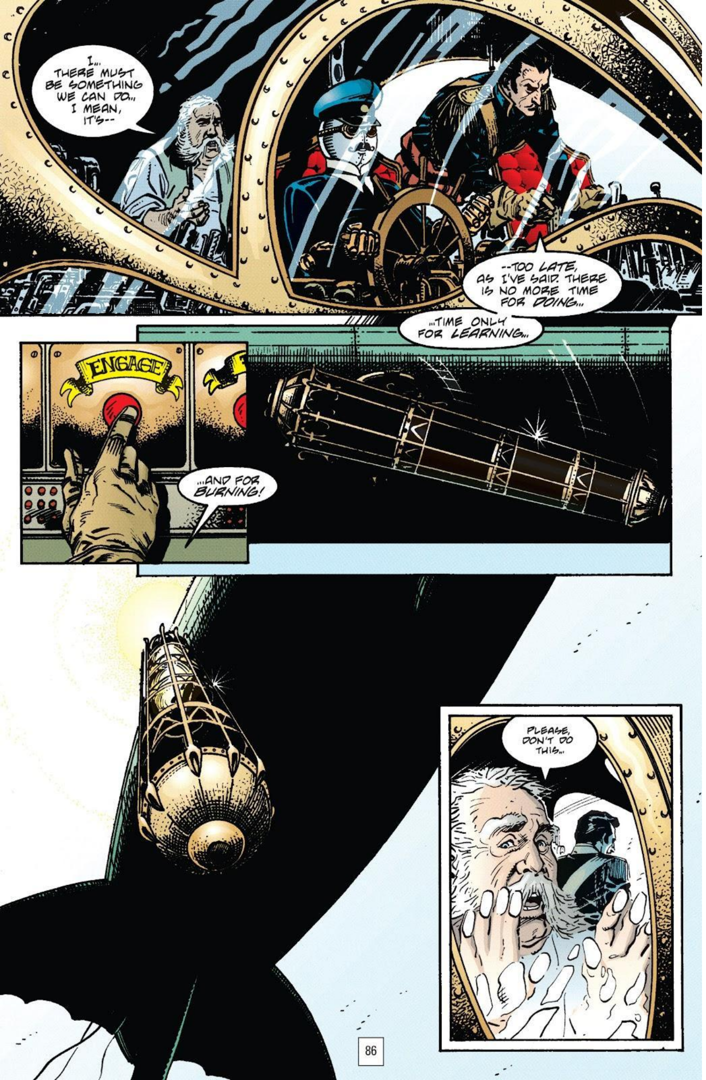
...OHGOD OHGODOHGOD...
UKKK
PLEASE DON'T KILL ME... I'LL GIVE YOU ANYTHING YOU WANT... ANYTHING...
IT IS MUCH TOO LATE NOW FOR THAT, MISTER MAYOR...
...BUT NOT TO WORRY, I HAVE NO INTEREST IN KILLING YOU. I WANT TO OPEN YOUR EYES... TO TEACH YOU.
NOW MY SHIP... AND OUR BUSINESS AWAIT... LET US BE OFF.
NO! NOT OUT THE WIND--
HAVE I NOT BEEN MOST PATIENT THUS FAR, MON AMI? PLEASE DO NOT MAKE ME REGRET THIS... GO!
YOU SHOULD BE HONORED, YOU KNOW. THIS IS A VERY RARE INVITATION I OFFER.
81

WELCOME TO MY HOME AMONG THE CLOUDS!
AHEAD IS THE MAIN SALON AND COMMAND BRIDGE...
...THE VERY BEATING HEART OF THIS GLORIOUS BIRD OF PREY!
ANTONIO! I AM RETURNED!
AND WE HAVE A GUEST!
THE MAYOR HAS KINDLY JOINED US FOR A SAMPLING OF OUR FABULOUS VIEW!
AND PERHAPS LATER A DISCUSSION OF PHILOSO-PHY.
BUT FIRST THINGS FIRST, ANTONIO. LET US NOT BE RUDE...
MISTER MAYOR, ALLOW ME TO PRESENT MY GREAT GOOD FRIEND AND ESTEEMED PARTNER, SIGNOR ANTONIO DIAVOLO.


"BUT LET US HURRY NOW. WE DON'T WISH TO BE LATE FOR THE FAIR..."
"WHERE IS TOLLIVER? THIS IS HIS PARTY, AFTER ALL."
...ALL MY LATEST ADVANCEMENTS IN INCANDESCENCE...
...AND BEFORE YOU KNOW IT, THERE WON'T BE ANY MORE GASLIGHTS!
...WASTE OF MONEY...
...POMPOUS, OVERBEARING...

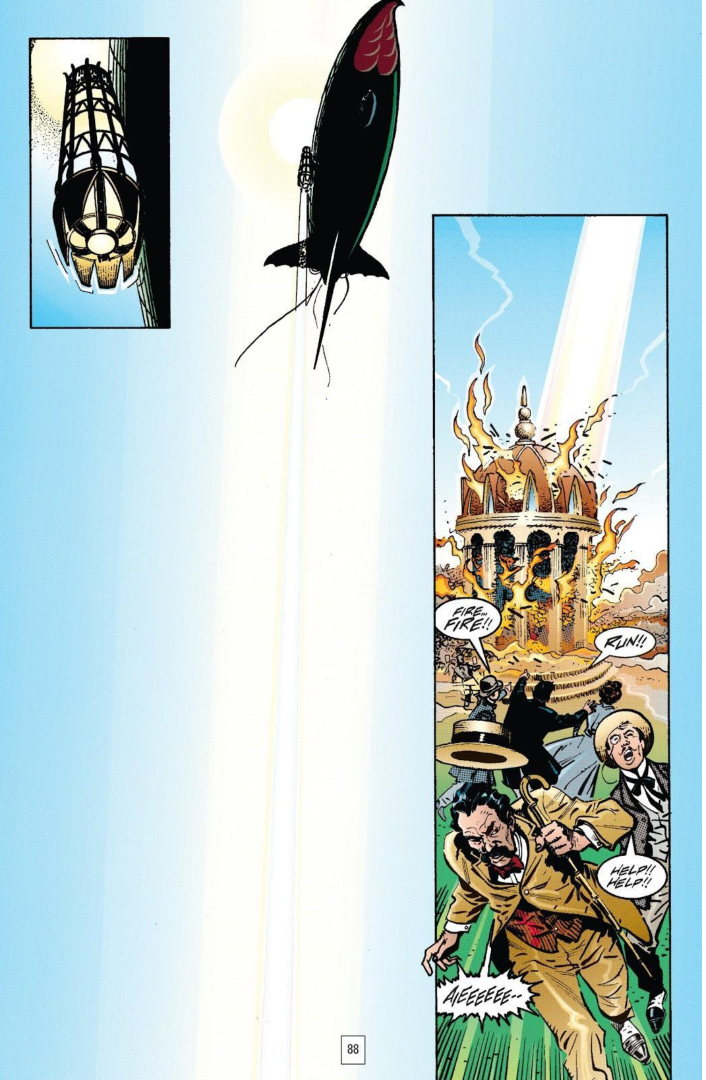
BUT THAT'S ALL OLD HAT, COMPARED TO MY LATEST... MY *KINETISCOPE!*
YES, I'VE READ OF THAT, *MOVING PICTURES* IN A BOX. I *MUST* COME SEE IT!
MOVING PICTURES, OF ALL *THINGS!* WHAT POSSIBLE GOOD CAN COME OF *THAT?!*
WELL, IT'S OFFICIAL, TOLLIVER IS LATE-- *TEN* MINUTES LATE! WHERE *IS* HE?
YES, WHERE...?
WHAT'S THAT SOUND... SOME KIND OF... *BUZZING?*
"WELL, THERE IS YOUR SO-VAUNTED *FAIR*, MISTER MAYOR... QUITE AN ARRAY.
"I MUST SAY THAT I AM *IMPRESSED* IN SPITE OF MYSELF."
BUT IMPRESSED OR NOT, I SPOKE OF *LESSONS*, DID I NOT?
YES... IT IS TIME YOU *LEARNED...*

COME. NOW THE LESSON.
I *TOLD* YOU THAT THIS FAIR WAS AN *AFFRONT* TO *REASON...*
...I *TOLD* YOU THAT I WOULD HAVE IT CANCELLED AS *TRIBUTE* TO MY SUPERIOR INTELLECT...
...AND YET IT GOES *ON!*
I ALSO *TOLD* YOU THAT I WOULD *BURN* YOUR CITY TO THE *GROUND...*
AND SO I SHALL.
"OH YES, INDEED, *I SHALL!*"



I... THERE MUST BE SOMETHING WE CAN DO... I MEAN, IT'S--
--TOO LATE, AS I'VE SAID. THERE IS NO MORE TIME FOR DOING...
...TIME ONLY FOR LEARNING...
ENGAGE
...AND FOR BURNING!
PLEASE, DON'T DO THIS...

NOPE, IT'S NOT PART OF THE SHOW... DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS.
IT'S TROUBLE.
THERE YOU AR--
BRUCE, WHAT IS THE MATTER?
I'VE GOT TO WARN THEM... SOMETHING'S ABOUT TO HAPPEN...
...SOMETHING VERY BAD, I FEAR.
NOW IS THE MOMENT OF TRUTH... SAY GOOD-BYE TO YOUR FRIENDS BELOW, MISTER MAYOR.
AND SAY SOME PRAYERS FOR THEM AS WELL.
ENGAGE



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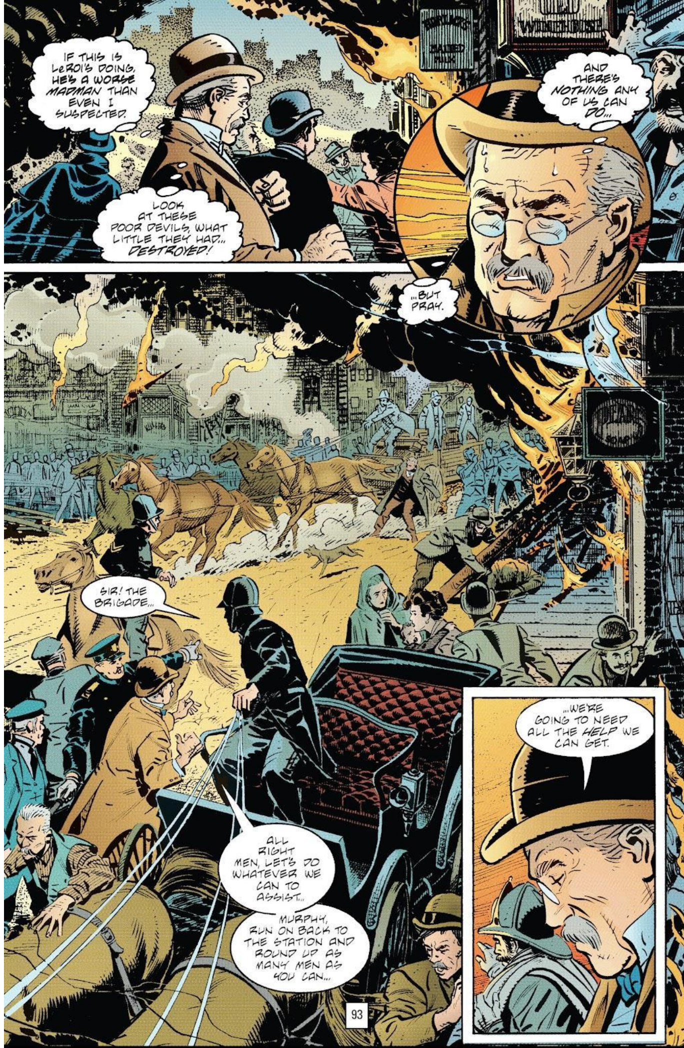
MY GOD! WE'RE DOOMED!!
THIS IS ALL TOLLIVER'S DOING... HE HAD TO GO ON WITH THIS FARCE!
NOW WE MAY DIE FOR HIS STUPIDITY... AND WHERE IS HE?!

WHERE IS SHE?!
JU-LEEE!
...WAIT, THAT BUZZING AGAIN...
...THE AIRSHIP!!
HE'S JUST SITTING UP THERE WATCHING US BURN... GLOATING!
IF ONLY I COULD GET MY HANDS ON HIM... GET UP THERE SOMEH--
IT MIGHT WORK... IT HAS TO...
THERE, IT'S COM--
THANK GOODNESS I'VE FOUND YOU, SIR!



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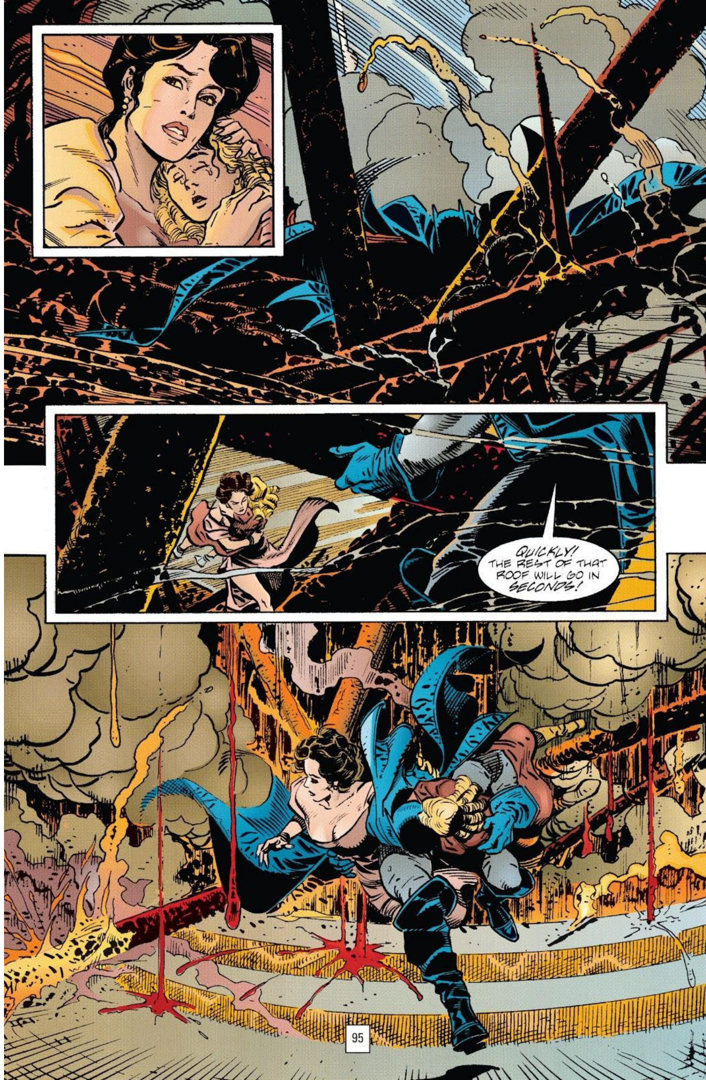
GOOD HEAVENS...THIS IS SO TERRIBLE...
...THE INJURED, THE DEAD...
HELP!
PLEASE, ANYBODY... HELP!
OH, LORD, A CHILD!
THERE'S NO ONE ELSE AROUND...
HOLD ON, I'M COMING!
COME HERE, DEAR. I'LL GET YOU OUT OF HERE...
OH... THE FIRE... WAS... OH, OH... OH...
HUSH, DARLING, IT'S ALL GOING TO BE AL--
GOD... NO!!


QUICKLY! THE REST OF THAT ROOF WILL GO IN SECONDS!

IT'S YOU!
THANK YOU, I--
IT WAS MY... PLEASURE. I MUST GO NOW.
YES, GO...
...STOP HIM.
"IT IS A BITTER RESPONSIBILITY I BEAR, ANTONIO.
"BUT I MUST BE STRICT!"
AND NOW... THEY WILL UNDERSTAND.

IT'S WORKING! I'M GLIDING ON THE RISING HOT AIR!
LET'S HOPE IT KEEPS UP.

WHAT'S THIS?! SOMEHOW, THE SHEEP STRIKE BACK!
ANTONIO! WE MUST BE OFF... IMMEDIATELY!!
DAMN THEM! NOW, THEY WILL REALLY PAY!!
NOW WE WILL DESTROY THEIR WHOLE WRETCHED CITY!!
WE'RE GOING UP... NOW!
ATTACK ME!! THEY NEVER LEARN, eh, ANTONIO?!
NO!!
YOU WILL...
...NOT...
...GET AWAY!!

WHATEVER IT WAS, IT MISSED.
NO...
...WHAT... HOW?!
IT ENDS NOW, MANIAC! AND YOU WILL PAY FOR YOUR CRIMES!!
WH... WHO ARE YOU TO COMMAND ME?

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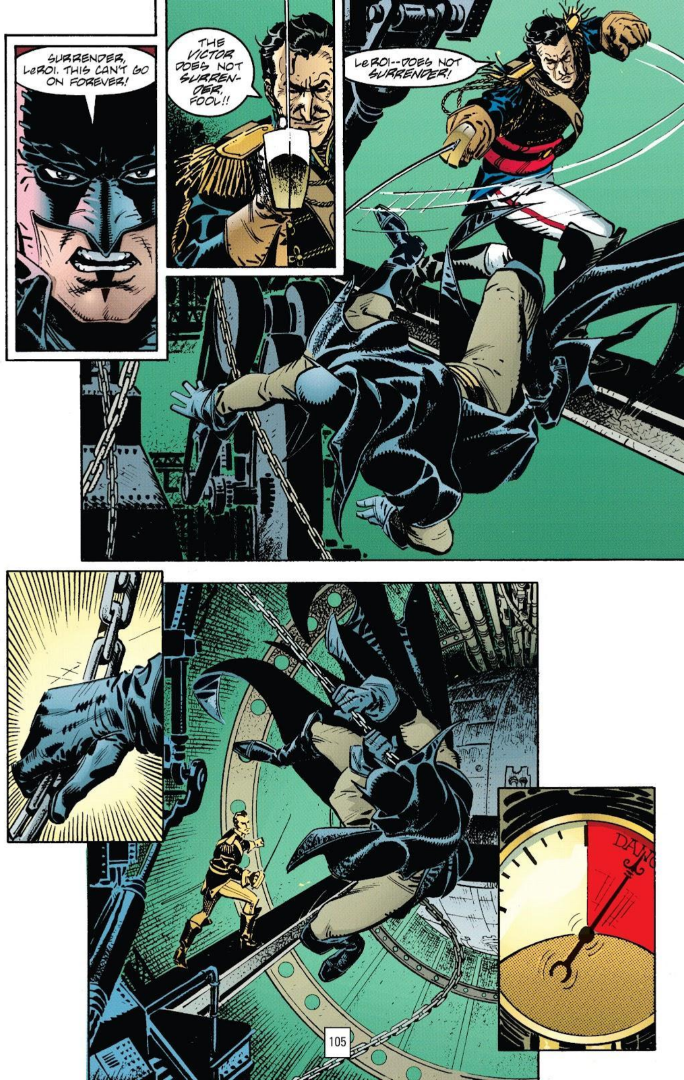
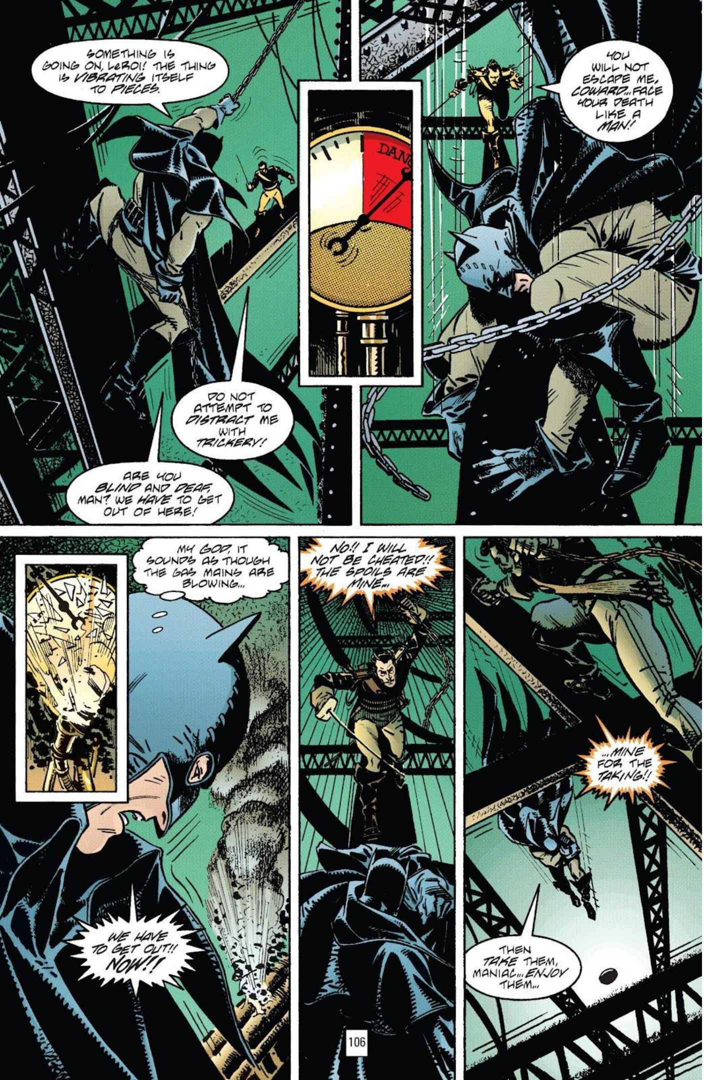
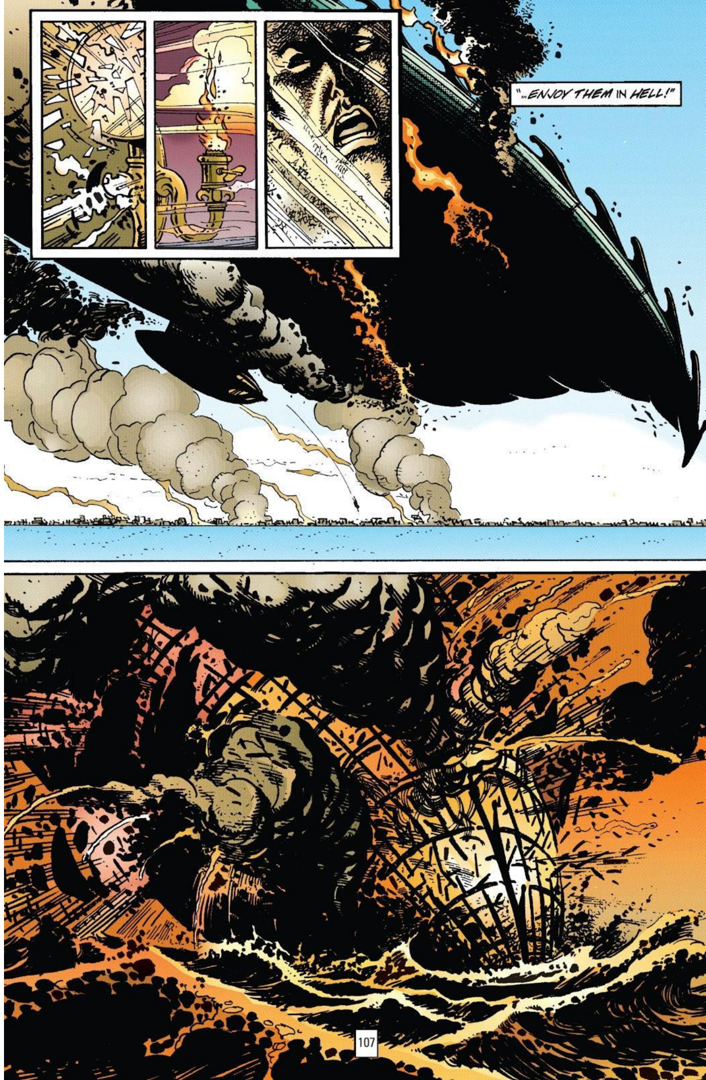
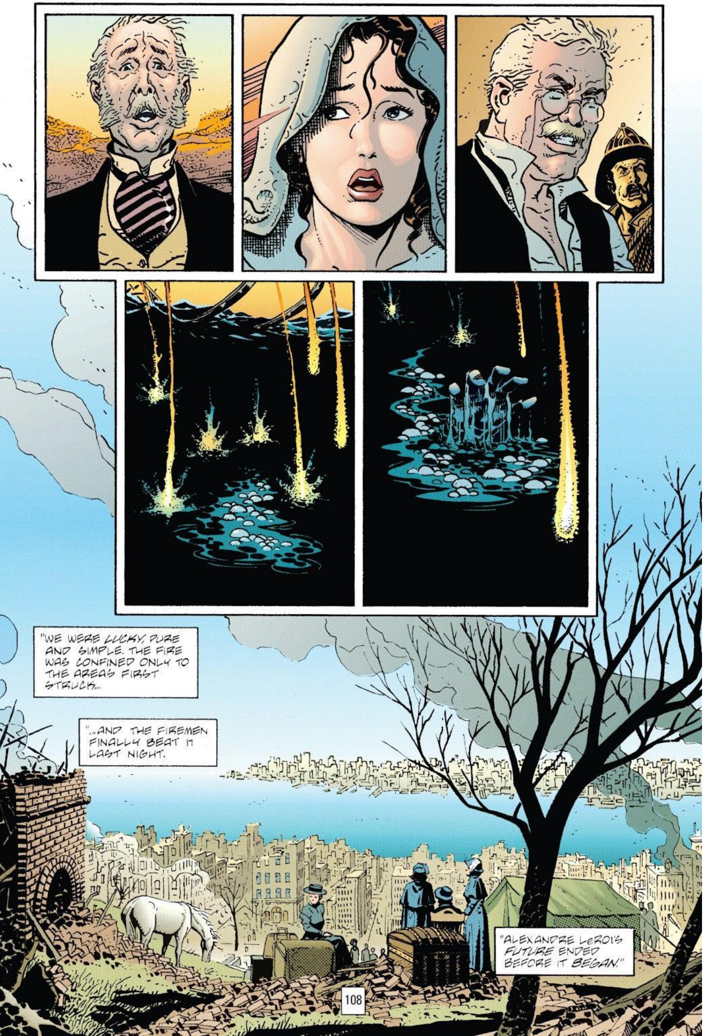
DANGER
Ah-ha! FIRST BLOOD BELONGS TO ME!
NOW FOR THE COUP DE GRA--
aaagghh!!
unnnh
I'LL CLAIM THAT AS SECOND BLOOD.
DANGER


SURRENDER, LeROI. THIS CAN'T GO ON FOREVER!
THE VICTOR DOES NOT SURRENDER, FOOL!!
LeROI--DOES NOT SURRENDER!

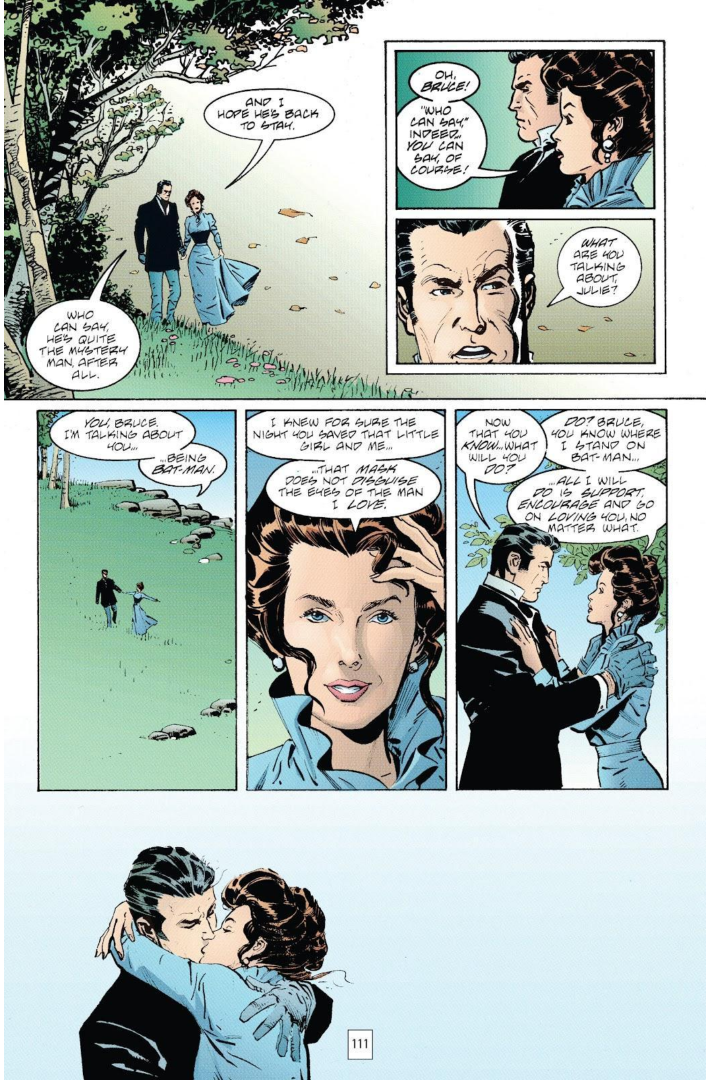

SOMETHING IS GOING ON, LeROI! THE THING IS VIBRATING ITSELF TO PIECES.
YOU WILL NOT ESCAPE ME, COWARD...FACE YOUR DEATH LIKE A MAN!
DO NOT ATTEMPT TO DISTRACT ME WITH TRICKERY!
ARE YOU BLIND AND DEAF, MAN? WE HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE!
MY GOD, IT SOUNDS AS THOUGH THE GAS MAINS ARE BLOWING...
WE HAVE TO GET OUT!! NOW!!
NO!! I WILL NOT BE CHEATED!! THE SPOILS ARE MINE...
...MINE FOR THE TAKING!!
THEN TAKE THEM, MANIAC...ENJOY THEM...


"...ENJOY THEM IN HELL!"


"WE WERE *LUCKY*, PURE AND SIMPLE. THE FIRE WAS CONFINED ONLY TO THE AREAS FIRST STRUCK...
"...AND THE FIREMEN FINALLY BEAT IT LAST NIGHT.
"ALEXANDRE LeROI'S *FUTURE* ENDED BEFORE IT *BEGAN*."
108

SADLY, 133 MEN WOMEN AND CHILDREN LOST *THEIR* FUTURES AS WELL.
YES, INCLUDING OUR LATE, ILLUSTRIOUS *MAYOR*...
YOU KNOW OF COURSE THAT I'M RUNNING IN THE SPECIAL ELECTION TO REPLACE HIM.
AND *UNOPPOSED* SO FAR... UNLESS CLAYPOOL DECIDES TO THROW HIS HAT IN.
I DON'T THINK YOU HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THAT.
COME IN...
...I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU.
FRANKLYN CLAYPOOL!
WHAT? *YOU?!!*
YOU KNOW WHY I'M HERE.
YES...
109

...OH YES. I WAS LeROI'S ACCOMPLICE.
HOW DID YOU KNOW?
NOTHING MORE THAN A HUNCH, ACTUALLY.
LeROI SWORE TO DESTROY THE FAIR AND THE CITY'S FINEST...
...BUT HE POINTEDLY DESTROYED THE RIVERSIDE SLUMS... HARDLY OUR FINEST ANYTHING...
IT COULD HAVE BEEN A MISTAKE, A MISGUIDED ATTACK, BUT THAT DIDN'T FEEL RIGHT.
SO I ASKED COMMISSIONER GORDON TO CHECK THE OWNERSHIP OF THAT PROPERTY.
HE CHASED THROUGH A MAZE OF FALSE LAND HOLDING COMPANIES, BUT HE FINALLY FOUND...
...ME. I OWN THAT PROPERTY.
I BOUGHT IT TO SELL BACK TO THE CITY SECRETLY WHEN MY SLUM RENEWAL PROGRAM WAS FIRST APPROVED.
AND WHEN THE FAIR JEOPARDIZED THE PROGRAM, YOU DECIDED TO PROFIT ON THE INSURANCE, INSTEAD.
YES, IT WAS PURE GREED... BUT I NEVER EXPECTED THE COST... LORD, ALL THOSE LIVES...
...ALL THOSE PEOPLE...
"...THANK GOD SOMEONE STOPPED THAT MADMAN LeROI."
LOVELY, ISN'T IT?
AND SAFE AGAIN... THANKS TO BAT-MAN.


AND I HOPE HE'S BACK TO STAY.
WHO CAN SAY, HE'S QUITE THE MYSTERY MAN, AFTER ALL.
OH, BRUCE!
"WHO CAN SAY," INDEED... YOU CAN SAY, OF COURSE!
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, JULIE?
YOU, BRUCE. I'M TALKING ABOUT YOU...
...BEING BAT-MAN.
I KNEW FOR SURE THE NIGHT YOU SAVED THAT LITTLE GIRL AND ME...
...THAT MASK DOES NOT DISGUISE THE EYES OF THE MAN I LOVE.
NOW THAT YOU KNOW... WHAT WILL YOU DO?
DO? BRUCE, YOU KNOW WHERE I STAND ON BAT-MAN...
...ALL I WILL DO IS SUPPORT, ENCOURAGE AND GO ON LOVING YOU, NO MATTER WHAT.

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BATMAN: GOTHAM BY GASLIGHT
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What would the Gotham City of one hundred years ago have been like?

In an age of mystery and superstition, how would the people of Gotham react to a weird creature of the night, a bat-garbed vigilante feared by the guilty and the innocent alike?

Some would live in terror. Others would rest easier.

Only one man would take no notice at all…a man with other matters to attend to. His name? No one knows for sure. Most people know him only as Jack.

Jack the Ripper.

BATMAN: GOTHAM BY GASLIGHT collects the classic tale of the Victorian era Bat-Man's encounter with the Butcher of Whitechapel alongside its acclaimed sequel, MASTER OF THE FUTURE, in which the Dark Knight encounters a crazed prophet determined to prevent Gotham City from entering the Twentieth Century.

This unforgettable blend of history, fantasy, science fiction and action comes together to demonstrate why Batman remains one of the world's most popular heroes.

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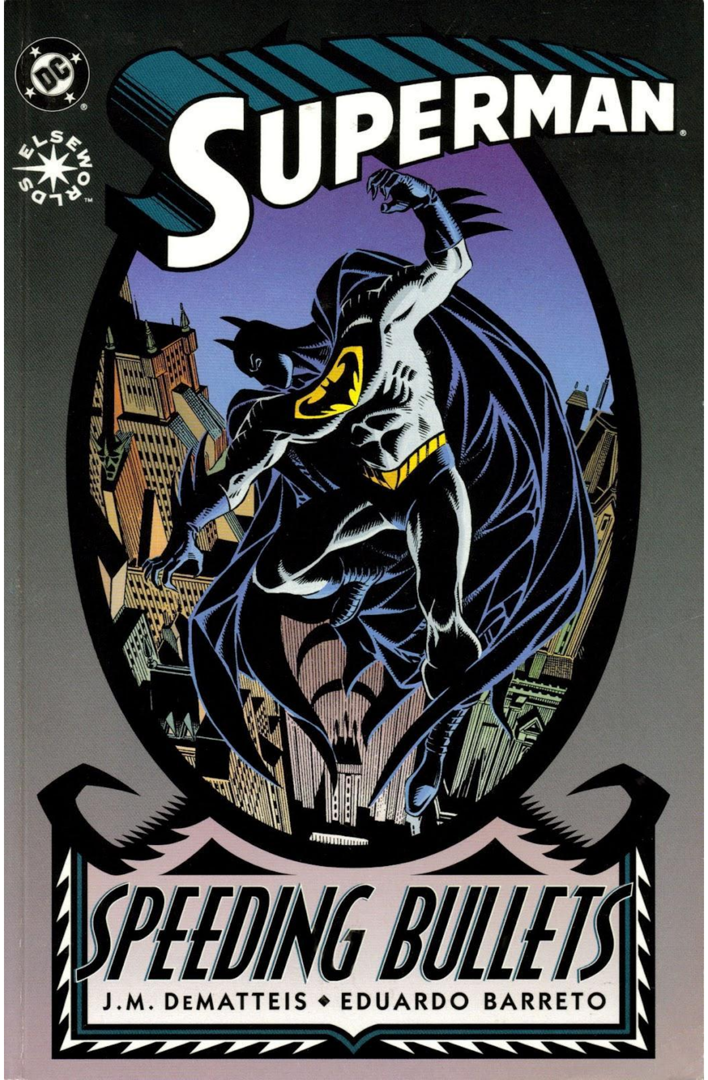
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SPEEDING BULLETS
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SUPERMAN: SPEEDING BULLETS

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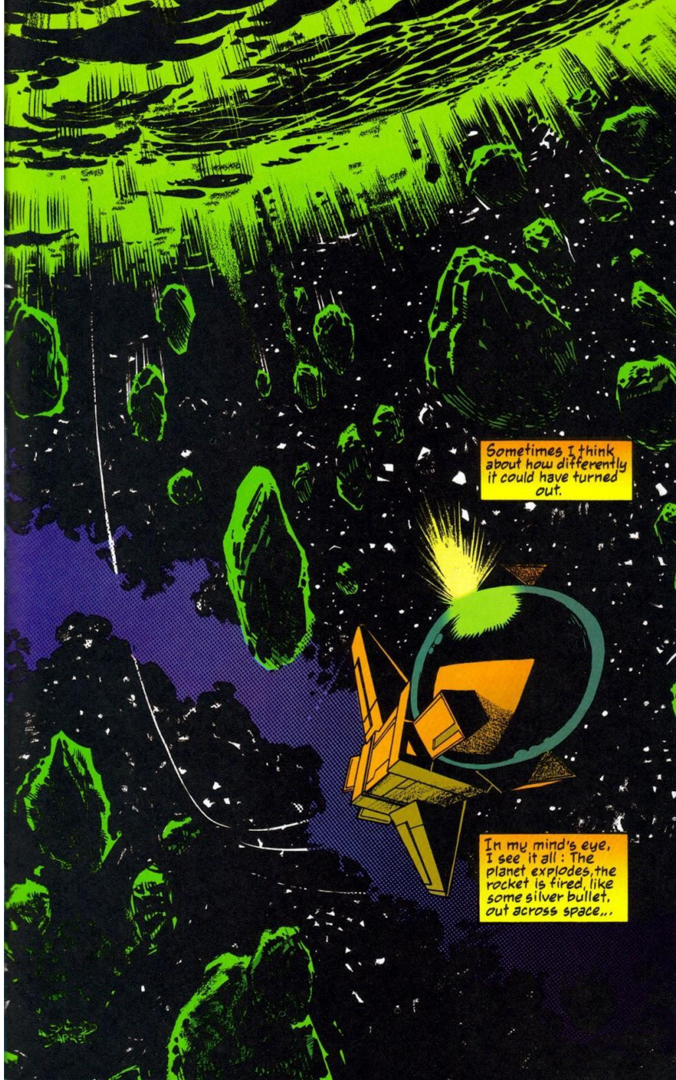

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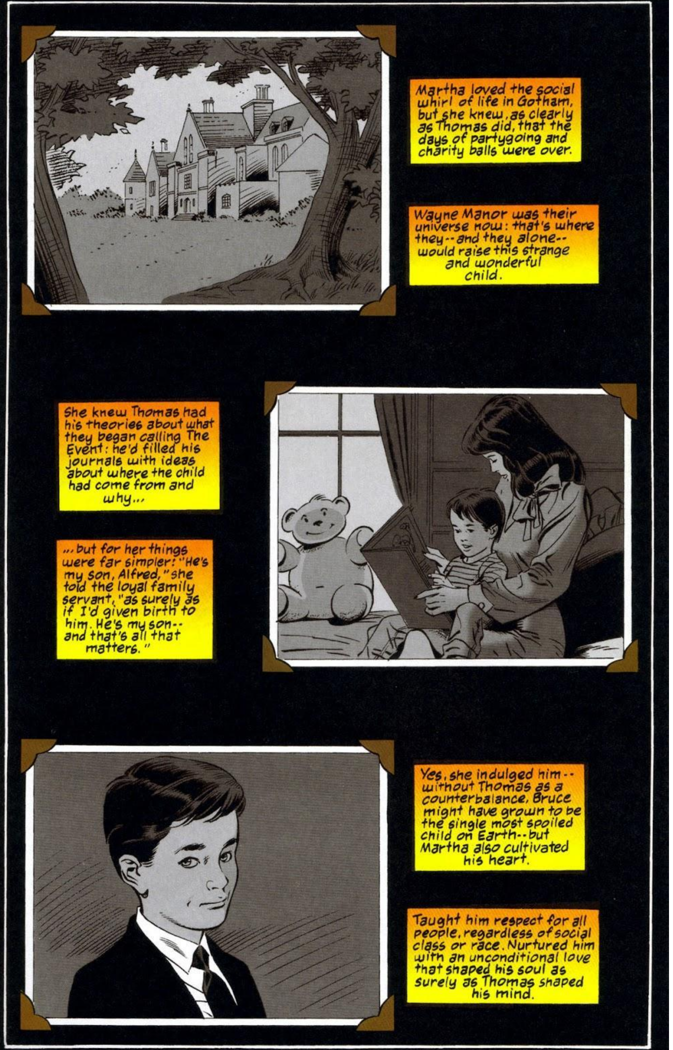
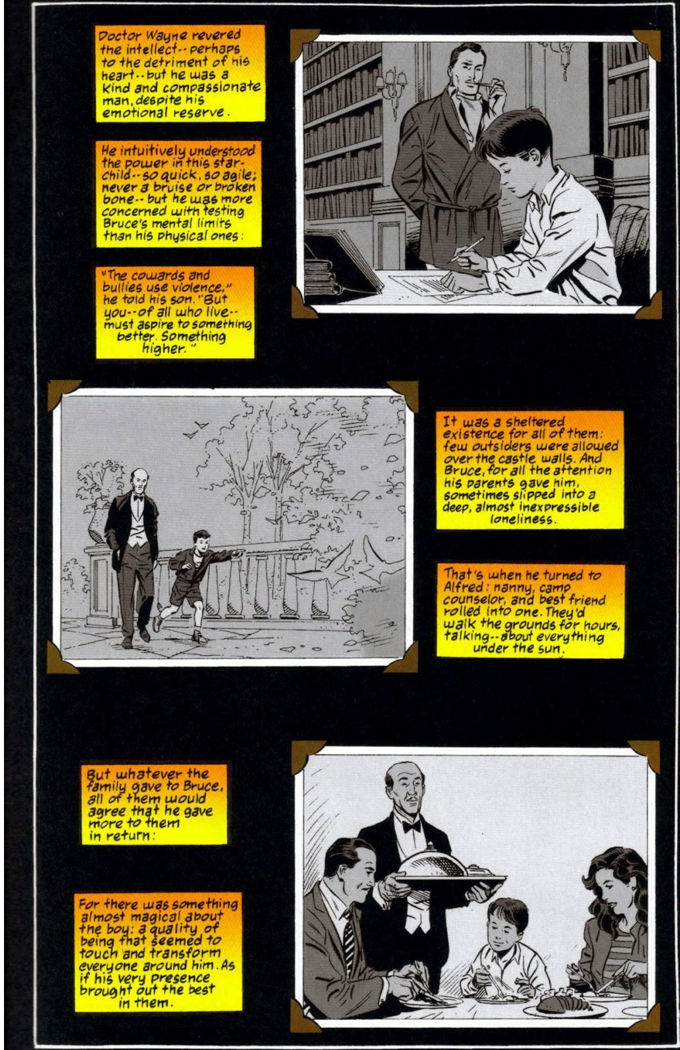

Martha loved the social whirl of life in Gotham, but she knew, as clearly as Thomas did, that the days of partygoing and charity balls were over.
Wayne Manor was their universe now: that's where they--and they alone--would raise this strange and wonderful child.
She knew Thomas had his theories about what they began calling The Event: he'd filled his journals with ideas about where the child had come from and why...
...but for her things were far simpler: "He's my son, Alfred," she told the loyal family servant, "as surely as if I'd given birth to him. He's my son--and that's all that matters."
Yes, she indulged him--without Thomas as a counterbalance, Bruce might have grown to be the single most spoiled child on Earth--but Martha also cultivated his heart.
Taught him respect for all people, regardless of social class or race. Nurtured him with an unconditional love that shaped his soul as surely as Thomas shaped his mind.

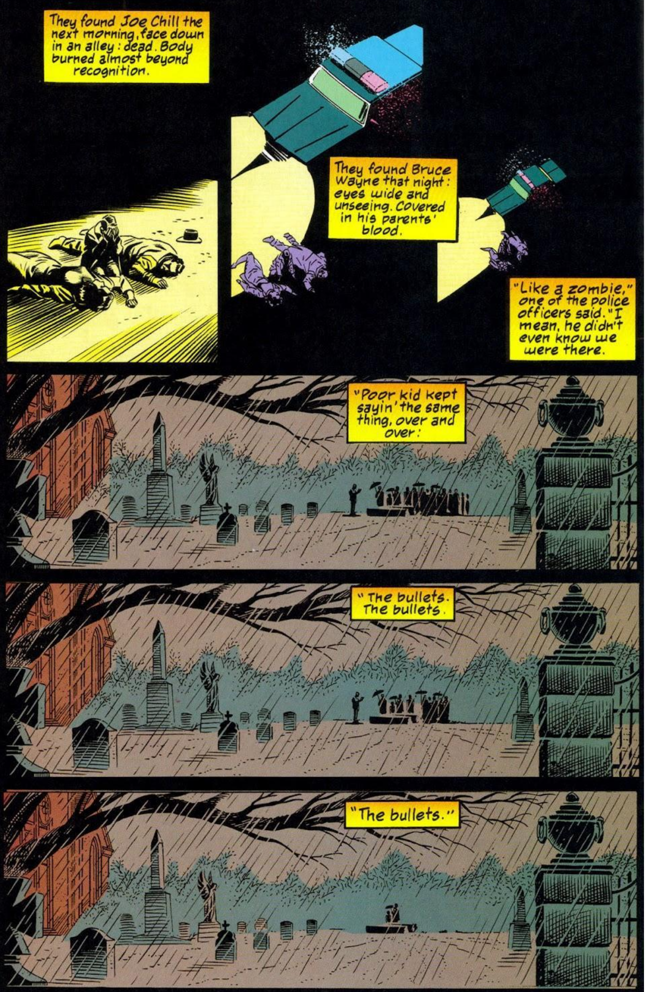

Doctor Wayne revered the intellect--perhaps to the detriment of his heart--but he was a kind and compassionate man, despite his emotional reserve.
He intuitively understood the power in this star-child--so quick, so agile; never a bruise or broken bone--but he was more concerned with testing Bruce's mental limits than his physical ones:
"The cowards and bullies use violence," he told his son. "But you--of all who live--must aspire to something better. Something higher."
It was a sheltered existence for all of them: few outsiders were allowed over the castle walls. And Bruce, for all the attention his parents gave him, sometimes slipped into a deep, almost inexpressible loneliness.
That's when he turned to Alfred: nanny, camp counselor, and best friend rolled into one. They'd walk the grounds for hours, talking--about everything under the sun.
But whatever the family gave to Bruce, all of them would agree that he gave more to them in return:
For there was something almost magical about the boy: a quality of being that seemed to touch and transform everyone around him. As if his very presence brought out the best in them.

And the years passed.
THAT WAS INCREDIBLE! THOSE OLD BLACK AND WHITE MOVIES ARE THE BEST!
MONARCH
I WANNA BE HIM! I WANNA BE ZORRO!
SWISH! SWISH!
DEFENDER OF THE WEAK! RIGHTER OF WRONGS!
LAST WEEK YOU WANTED TO BE JOHN CARTER, AND BEFORE THAT IT WAS SHERLOCK HOLMES.
NOW HOLMES--THERE'S A ROLE MODEL I CAN APPROVE OF. A THINKER OF THE FIRST RANK.
YEAH--BUT ZORRO'S CLOTHES ARE COOLER!
HE'S GOT YOU THERE, DEAR.
YOU CAN'T RIGHT WRONGS WITH A FIST OR A SWORD, BRUCE. IT JUST DOESN'T WORK THAT WAY.
MAYBE NOT. BUT IT SURE WOULD BE GREAT IF IT--
NOT--
--A--
--WORD.
--DID...?
Y'HEAR ME? NOT A WORD OUTTA ANY OF YOU--
--OR I'LL BLOW YA FROM HERE T'HELL.
NOW LET'S HAVE THOSE PEARLS, LADY.
NO! LET GO OF ME!
MARTHA!

KRAK
He told me, years later, how happy he'd been that night.
I SAID SHUT UP!
BOTH OF YOU!
SWAK
He always loved it when--once a month--they took him out into the city.
YOU STUPID--!
WHY'D YOU MAKE ME HAVE T'DO THIS, HUH?
Dinner at a fancy restaurant. A movie of his choice.
BLAM
WHY'D YOU MAKE ME HAVE T'DO THIS?!
BLAM
BLAM
But that night was even more special.

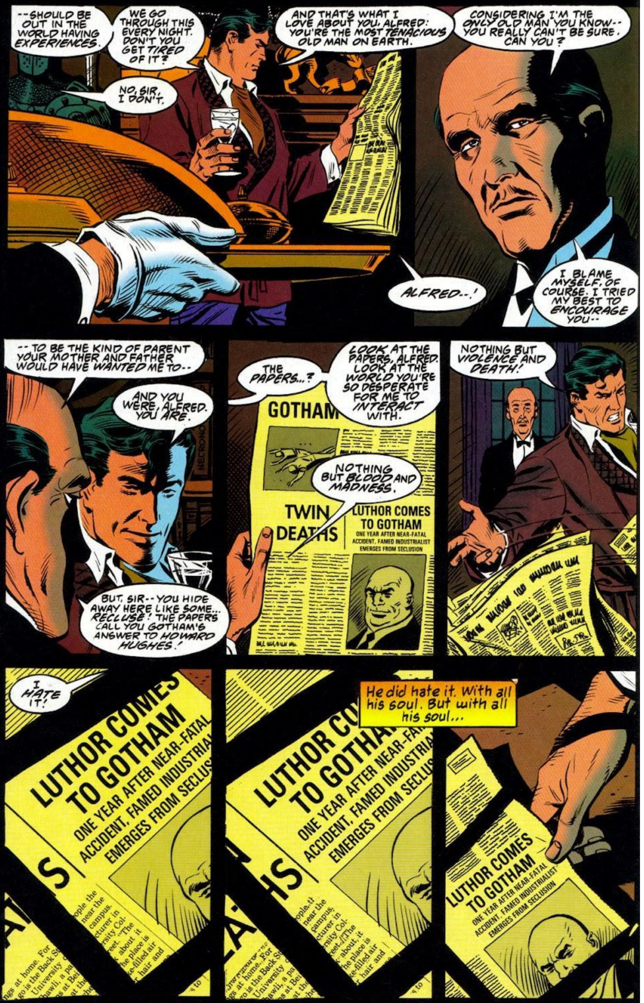
They'd announced over dinner that they'd thought about it and, yes, he could go to the Gotham Academy, starting in the fall.
...MOTHER...
...FATHER...
HEY-- DON'T CRY, LITTLE GUY.
"It's time to face the world, Bruce," his father told him, while his mother fought back the inevitable tears.
I HATE IT WHEN KIDS CRY.
"There's just so long we can protect you from it."
I HATE IT!
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
AND--
-- I --
-- HATE --

--YOU!
YAAARRR!
FRAKKK
OH, PLEASE! OH, GOD..
MOTHER... FATHER--!
--MAKE IT STOP!
--MAKE IT STOP.



They found Joe Chill the next morning, face down in an alley: dead. Body burned almost beyond recognition.
They found Bruce Wayne that night: eyes wide and unseeing. Covered in his parents' blood.
"Like a zombie," one of the police officers said. "I mean, he didn't even know we were there.
"Poor kid kept sayin' the same thing, over and over:
"The bullets. The bullets.
"The bullets."

For years that's all he remembered: the bullets, flashing in the darkness. Like silver rockets. Like shooting stars.
GOOD EVENING, SIR--
He knew there was nothing he could have done. He was only nine years old. How could he possibly have saved them?
That--and a feeling of deep guilt. Deep shame.
But the guilt..
...and the shame...
...remained.
--BREAKFAST IS SERVED.
THANK YOU, ALFRED.
HONESTLY, SIR--BREAKFAST AT NINE P.M. WANDERING THE HOUSE LIKE A GHOST ALL NIGHT--SLEEPING ALL THROUGH THE DAY.
A VITAL YOUNG MAN OF TWENTY-ONE SHOULD--


--SHOULD BE OUT IN THE WORLD HAVING EXPERIENCES.
WE GO THROUGH THIS EVERY NIGHT. DON'T YOU GET TIRED OF IT?
NO, SIR, I DON'T.
AND THAT'S WHAT I LOVE ABOUT YOU, ALFRED: YOU'RE THE MOST TENACIOUS OLD MAN ON EARTH.
CONSIDERING I'M THE ONLY OLD MAN YOU KNOW-- YOU REALLY CAN'T BE SURE, CAN YOU?
ALFRED--!
I BLAME MYSELF, OF COURSE. I TRIED MY BEST TO ENCOURAGE YOU--
--TO BE THE KIND OF PARENT YOUR MOTHER AND FATHER WOULD HAVE WANTED ME TO--
AND YOU WERE, ALFRED. YOU ARE.
BUT, SIR--YOU HIDE AWAY HERE LIKE SOME... RECLUSE! THE PAPERS CALL YOU GOTHAM'S ANSWER TO HOWARD HUGHES!
THE PAPERS...?
LOOK AT THE PAPERS, ALFRED. LOOK AT THE WORLD YOU'RE SO DESPERATE FOR ME TO INTERACT WITH.
GOTHAM
NOTHING BUT BLOOD AND MADNESS.
TWIN DEATHS
LUTHOR COMES TO GOTHAM
ONE YEAR AFTER NEAR-FATAL ACCIDENT, FAMED INDUSTRIALIST EMERGES FROM SECLUSION
NOTHING BUT VIOLENCE AND DEATH!
I HATE IT!
LUTHOR COMES TO GOTHAM
ONE YEAR AFTER NEAR-FATAL ACCIDENT, FAMED INDUSTRIAL EMERGES FROM SECLUS
He did hate it. With all his soul. But with all his soul...
LUTHOR COMES TO GOTHAM
ONE YEAR AFTER NEAR-FATAL ACCIDENT, FAMED INDUSTRIALIST EMERGES FROM SECLUSION

...he needed it.
The blood, the madness--
--the violence and death--
--carefully clipped from the newspapers.
Pasted up, locked away: enshrined.
Why did he do it? He couldn't say then. He still can't.

But something in those images of murderous violence kept him sane.
COP SHOT!
TEACHER DIES IN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL KNIFING
As if, by obsessing on other people's pain...
...he could avoid his own.
GOTHAM HEIGHTS FAMILY FOUND SLAIN
But that night his shrine couldn't protect him: he could hear every gunshot, every desperate cry for help; the sound of flesh being cut; of bones being shattered.
As if all the awful sounds of the Gotham streets were pouring into his head.
...an irresistible wave of human suffering.
MOTHER--
--FATHER--
--MAKE IT STOP!

MAKE IT STOP!
And then he heard it: not from the world outside... but from the world inside.
Unfamiliar voices in the adjoining room. Unfamiliar footsteps on the carpet. And he knew:
His world, his universe...
...had been invaded.
OKAY, WAYNE. JUST TAKE IT NICE 'N' EASY-- AN' THE OLD MAN STAYS IN ONE PIECE.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN MY HOUSE? HOW DARE YOU COME IN HERE AND--
DIDN'T YOU HEAR WHAT I SAID?
SHUT YOUR FREAKIN' MOUTH--
--OR JEEVES HERE IS HISTORY.
ANIMALS!
HEY--YOU THINK I'M KIDDIN'? YOU THINK I WON'T--
STINKING--
--MURDERING--

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--THE OTHER ONE...?!
KRROOOM!
OH, MY GOD!
OH, MY GOD...!
I REMEMBER!
MY PARENTS--
--I COULD HAVE SAVED THEM...
ALFRED--

--WHAT AM I?
I BELIEVE THE ANSWER--
KLIK
--IS DOWN HERE.
In a cave beneath the Mansion, the rocket sat, preserved, like some museum piece. And, beside it, the books, the journals.
Thomas Wayne's journals-- with his personal account of The Event--and all the years that followed.
Bruce stood there, in the silence of that cool and musty cave, reading a history at once unknown to him...
...and utterly familiar.
WHAT AM I?

THERE'S MY ANSWER, ALFRED! UP THERE, WHIRLING IN THE DARKNESS!
CAN YOU SEE THEM? CAN YOU SEE MY BROTHERS?
NO, OF COURSE YOU CAN'T. BUT I CAN. I CAN SEE THINGS--HEAR THINGS--THAT NO ONE ELSE CAN.
I CAN SPREAD MY "WINGS" AND FLY THROUGH THE SHADOWS OF THE NIGHT!
THERE'S SO MUCH I CAN DO... THAT I'VE NEVER LET MYSELF KNOW I CAN DO.
I'VE HIDDEN SO MUCH OF MY OWN POWER FROM MYSELF--AS PUNISHMENT FOR THAT LITTLE BOY'S CRIMES!
BUT I'M NOT PUNISHING MYSELF ANY MORE, ALFRED!
I KNOW MYSELF--
--AT LAST!

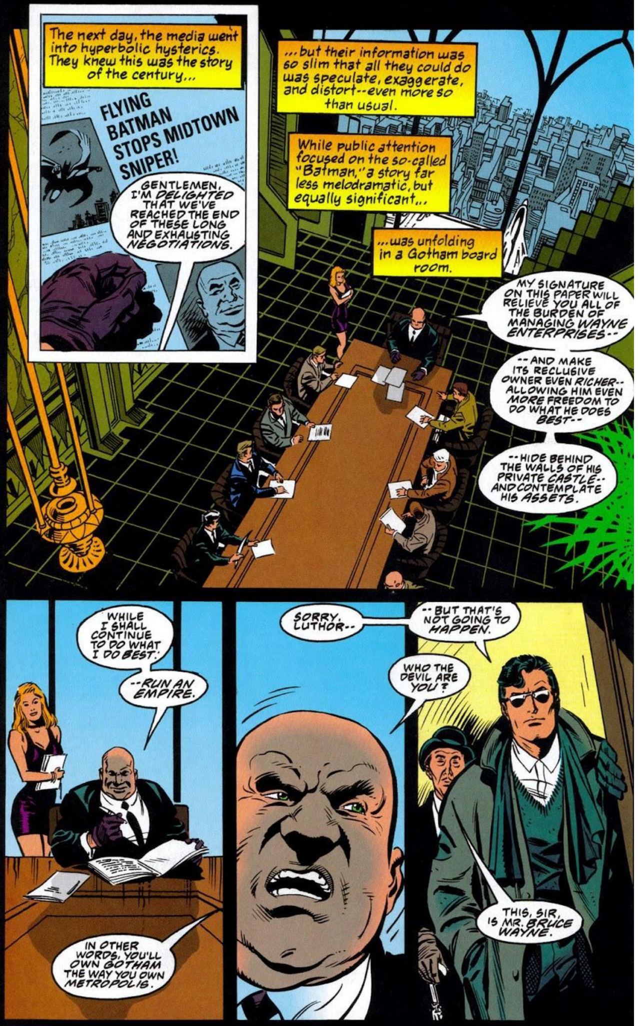
Self-knowledge: to one man, it's dark liberation. To another, even darker...
I'M SO DISAPPOINTED, GENTLEMEN.
REALLY--ALL YOU HAD TO DO WAS BREAK INTO THE MANSION... NOT DIFFICULT CONSIDERING THE EQUIPMENT I GAVE YOU--
--MESS THINGS UP A LITTLE--MAKE SURE YOUR APPEARANCE WAS NOTED--
--SCARE THE RABBIT DEEPER INTO HIS HOLE--
--AND THEN LEAVE.
I SWEAR... WE DID! BUT WAYNE, HE WAS CRAZY--
--PUT CHARLIE RIGHT THROUGH THE WINDOW! AN' ME--LOOKIT WHAT HE DONE T'--
SPARE ME YOUR BAD GRAMMAR--
--AND YOUR ABYSMAL EXCUSES.
HEY! WHERE'D HE--?
YOU WERE PAID IN ADVANCE.
AND YOU FAILED.
WHAT'S THE MATTER, BOYS?
ALL CHOKED UP?
HA HA HA HEE HEE HEE
¡GAKKK!
¡AAAAKKK!
...darker madness.

TWO MONTHS LATER...
KRAK!
His name was Mick Johnson. Forty-five years old. Divorced. Unemployed. Seriously depressed.
The psychiatrist's report said he'd been horribly abused as a child. That he'd repressed his anger, pushed it down deep, where it festered for years and years.
But anger needs expression.
And that night Mick Johnson had "expressed" six innocent people--two of them policemen--into the hospital.
KAAKAAKAAK
He was a man in desperate need of help.
But before anyone could reach out a compassionate hand...

...he had to be stopped.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT KINDA CRAZY UNIFORM THAT IS--
--BUT IF YOU COPS THINK YOU CAN SCARE ME, YOU'RE--!
KRAKAKAKAKAK
OKAY--SO YA GOT SOME KINDA FANCY FLAK-JACKET!
BUT IT AIN'T GONNA STOP THIS! THIS BABY'LL BLOW US BOTH FROM HERE T'--
YOU WANT IT?
YOU GOT IT!
FWOOMF!

Reports on the ground were confused. There was someone--or some thing--on the roof with Johnson. Gunfire. A muffled explosion.
And then Johnson came over the edge.
At first they thought he'd jumped--but Johnson swore, later, that the "creature" had thrown him--as effortlessly as we'd toss a piece of paper into the trash.
He said he didn't know until that moment, just how much...
...he wanted to live.
Jaws were dropping, cameras were clicking. No one was sure just what it was they'd seen...
...but they all seemed to sense that something had happened...
...that would change everything.



The next day, the media went into hyperbolic hysterics. They knew this was the story of the century...
FLYING BATMAN STOPS MIDTOWN SNIPER!
GENTLEMEN, I'M DELIGHTED THAT WE'VE REACHED THE END OF THESE LONG AND EXHAUSTING NEGOTIATIONS.
...but their information was so slim that all they could do was speculate, exaggerate, and distort--even more so than usual.
While public attention focused on the so-called "Batman," a story far less melodramatic, but equally significant...
...was unfolding in a Gotham board room.
MY SIGNATURE ON THIS PAPER WILL RELIEVE YOU ALL OF THE BURDEN OF MANAGING WAYNE ENTERPRISES--
--AND MAKE ITS RECLUSIVE OWNER EVEN RICHER-- ALLOWING HIM EVEN MORE FREEDOM TO DO WHAT HE DOES BEST--
--HIDE BEHIND THE WALLS OF HIS PRIVATE CASTLE-- AND CONTEMPLATE HIS ASSETS.
WHILE I SHALL CONTINUE TO DO WHAT I DO BEST:
--RUN AN EMPIRE.
IN OTHER WORDS, YOU'LL OWN GOTHAM THE WAY YOU OWN METROPOLIS.
SORRY, LUTHOR--
--BUT THAT'S NOT GOING TO HAPPEN.
WHO THE DEVIL ARE YOU?
THIS, SIR, IS MR. BRUCE WAYNE.

WAYNE? YOU CAN'T BE WAYNE!
OH, BUT I AM--
--AND I... REGRET TO INFORM YOU, MR. LUTHOR--THAT I NEVER GAVE MY PERMISSION FOR THIS BUYOUT TO GO THROUGH--
BRODSKY... FILLMORE--DEAL WITH THIS! NOW!
MISTER WAYNE... PLEASE... YOU CAN'T JUST COME STROLLING IN HERE AND UPSET A--
ACTUALLY, I CAN DO WHATEVER I WANT.
AS WELL YOU SHOULD!
I KNOW THAT, TILL NOW, I'VE KEPT OUT OF THESE BUSINESS AFFAIRS--
--BUT TIMES HAVE CHANGED.
I'VE CHANGED.
AND I INTEND TO BE VERY ACTIVELY INVOLVED WITH THE DAY-TO-DAY WORKINGS OF MY COMPANIES FROM NOW ON.
SO, WITH ALL DUE RESPECT TO MISTER LUTHOR AND HIS STAFF, I'M AFRAID THIS MEETING IS CONCLUDED.
OH, AND ONE MORE THING: BRODSKY, FILLMORE--
--YOUR FIRM'S SERVICES WILL NO LONG BE REQUIRED.
GOOD DAY, GENTLEMEN.
NOW YOU WAIT ONE DAMN MINUTE!
I MOVED MY CORPORATE SEAT TO THIS RAT-HOLE OF A CITY SO THAT I COULD OVERSEE MY IN-TERESTS HERE--
--AND IF YOU THINK LEX LUTHOR IS GOING TO LET SOME GUTLESS RECLUSE CRAWL OUT OF HIS HOLE AND--
MR. LUTHOR, I READ--WITH GREAT COMPASSION--ABOUT THE EXPLOSION AT YOUR CHEMICAL FACTORY LAST YEAR.
HOW YOU ALMOST DIED... KEPT YOURSELF HIDDEN AWAY FOR MONTHS.
HOW, FINALLY, YOU EMERGED FROM YOUR SECLUSION AND RESUMED YOUR LIFE IN THE WORLD.
I TRULY RESPECT YOUR COURAGE.
I HOPE YOU CAN RESPECT MINE.
Lex must have been fuming.

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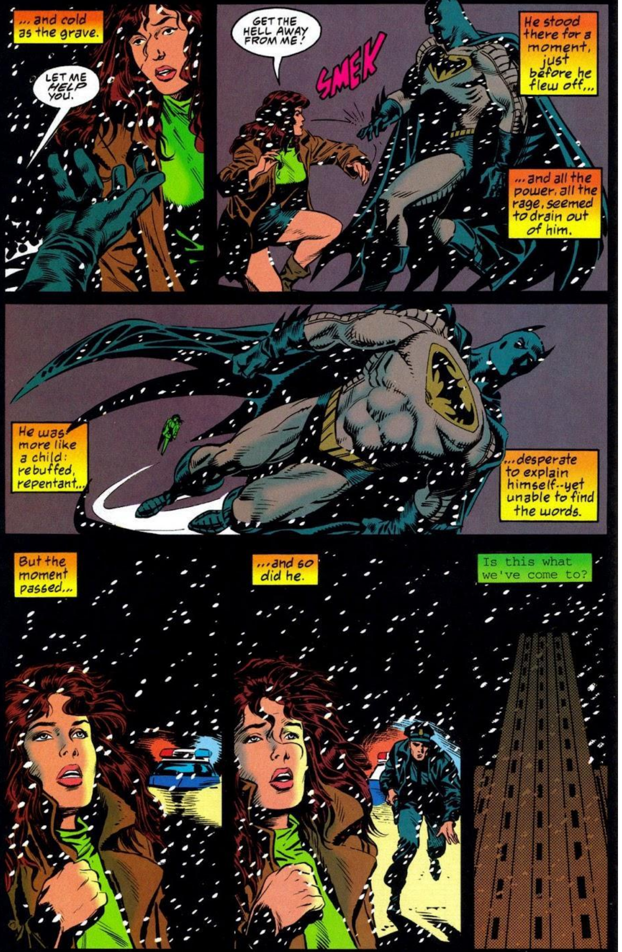
IT'S BEEN A WHILE, LEX. THE MAYOR'S INAUGURAL, I THINK.
UMM. THAT WAS AROUND THE TIME THE "PLANET" RAN THAT DESPICABLE ARTICLE ABOUT ME.
REALLY, LOIS-- THE VERY SUGGESTION THAT I MIGHT HAVE KILLED MY PARENTS--!
WHAT BOTHERED YOU, LEX? WHAT I WROTE--OR THE FACT THAT YOU LOST THE LIBEL SUIT?
LOIS, YOU TARNISHED MY GOOD NAME.
SO YOU BOUGHT THE PAPER... JUST TO PROTECT YOUR REPUTATION?
THAT'S ALL IN THE PAST, MY DEAR. I'M A DIFFERENT PERSON--
--SINCE THE ACCIDENT.
A MAN CHANGES... WHEN HE'S FACED DEATH.
THE CHEMICALS! THE FLAMES! IT WAS... HORRIBLE.
I HAVE TO ADMIT, I'M INTRIGUED.
AFTER THE EXPLOSION AT YOUR PLANT, YOU KEPT YOURSELF WELL-HIDDEN. EVEN HERE IN GOTHAM, YOU'VE ONLY SHOWN YOUR FACE A HALF-DOZEN TIMES--
--SO WHY THIS SUDDEN INTEREST IN ME?
WHAT I SAID IS TRUE, LOIS: I'VE CHANGED--MORE THAN YOU CAN IMAGINE.
BUT THE ONE THING THAT HASN'T CHANGED--IS MY ATTRACTION TO YOU.
IT'S FATE THAT'S BROUGHT US BOTH TO GOTHAM. AND IT'S FATE THAT'S PULLING US TOGETHER.
QUIT YOUR JOB AT THE "GAZETTE." COME WORK FOR ME AND--
DON'T YOU--
SMEK
--EVER--
--PUT YOUR HANDS ON ME!

SO BE IT, MY DEAR.
BUT I WILL HAVE YOU.
YOU--AND THIS CITY BOTH.
--VERY SOON.
SKRREEEEEEE
I BELIEVE THIS IS WHERE YOU GET OFF.
IT'S ONLY FIFTY OR SO BLOCKS TO YOUR APARTMENT.
ENJOY THE WALK.
HA HA HA HEEE HEEE
JERK!
...and I had a feeling that the neighborhood Lex dropped me off in...
NIIICE LEGS.
...wasn't one of its best.
First order of business was to find a phone and call a cab. Gotham was still new to me.
AND THE REST OF YOU'S NOT BAD, EITHER.

I'm not from the "helpless female" school. Never needed a white Knight to come rescue me.
COME ON, "LEGS." FOUR LONELY BOYS HERE LOOKIN' FOR FUN.
AN' YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY--FUN'S THE ONE THING MONEY CAN'T BUY.
I've studied karate. Had a can of mace in my bag just in case.
But Bruce Wayne and I had something in common: We were both...
KLANKOOMP
...klutzes!
HOOOHOOO HOOOOHAW
I was as embarrassed as I was scared...
I was ready to say my first prayer since grade school...
HEY--WHAZZAT?!
RUMMMMM
...when the earthquake hit.
SKOOOM

I'd seen all the footage on the sniper incident.
SKAK!
WHUD
MY FACE!
OH, GOD--
--MY FACE!
Read the confused reports on the Batman's subsequent appearances.
CHAK
I admit I was fascinated with him.
The feeling in the city was that Gotham had found a protector. A real hero--unafraid to stand up to the bullies and cowards.
KRAKT
AAAAAAA.!
But watching him break those boys apart--I could smell the burning flesh, hear the splintering bones--
--I understood that this man... if he was a man... was no hero.
He was a dangerous, psychopathic animal.
I COULD KILL YOU, YOU KNOW.
ONE FINGER--RIGHT THROUGH YOUR HEAD. SPLATTER YOUR BRAINS ALL OVER THE STREET.
PLEASEOH PLEASEDON'T KILLMEGOD PLEASE DON'T!
DON'T WORRY, SCUM--
--YOU'RE NOT WORTH IT.
Even his voice: dark...



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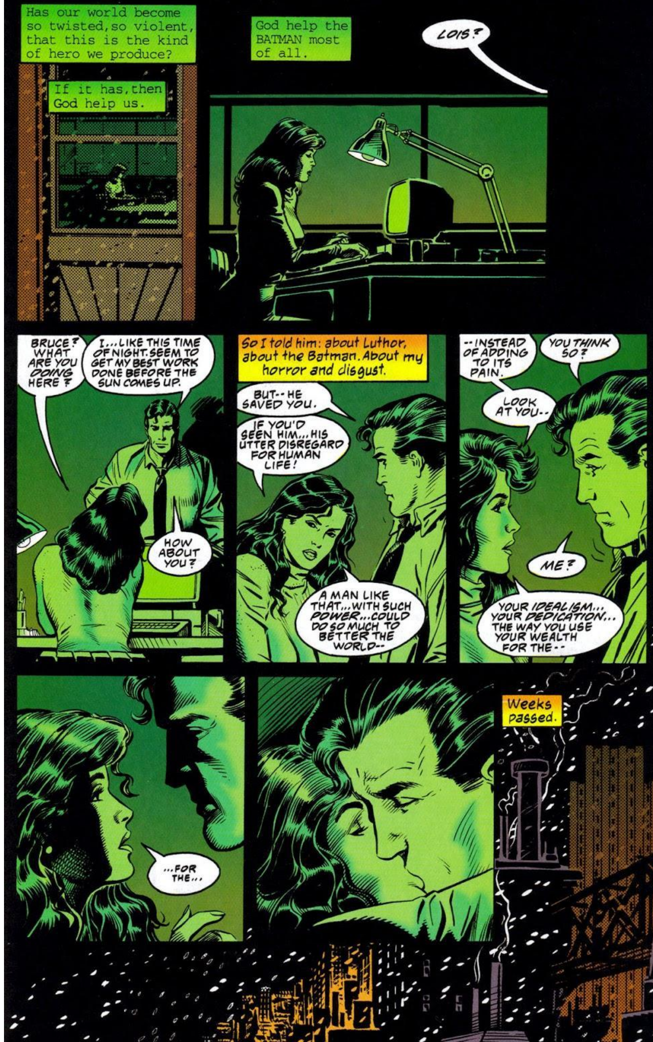
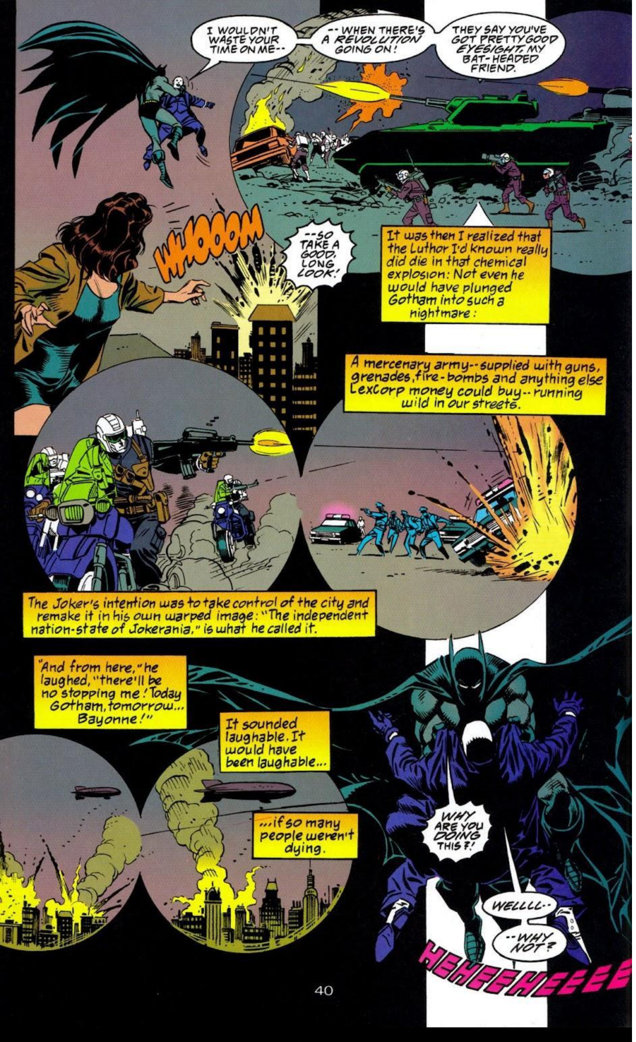


The "Gazette" was gathering information on Luthor's dealings in Gotham. He was up to something, our little Lex was.
SIR? SIR?
THAT'S MR. WAYNE'S OFFICE! YOU CAN'T GO IN THERE!
Something big: multimillion dollar drug deals, illegal arms shipments, all pointed to him...
...but, as usual, there was no concrete proof.
Batman was everywhere during that time: he seemed as determined to crush Luthor as we were...
...and he was no more successful.
I'M TELLING YOU, BRUCE--YOU RUN THAT STORY AND LUTHOR'LL SUE THE PANTS OFF YOU--
I'VE GOT A CLOSET FULL OF PANTS, PERRY. WE'RE RUNNING IT.
THE ONLY THING YOU'LL BE RUNNING, MR. PUBLISHER--
HEY!
--IS YOUR OWN OBITUARY!
YOU?!
AH... LOIS. MY DARLING. I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT BE IN HERE!
WHAT DO YOU WANT?
REMEMBER WHEN I TOLD YOU THAT THE EXPLOSION HAD MADE ME-- A NEW MAN? WELL, MY DEAR--
--THE TIME HAS COME--
--TO SHOW YOU--
RRRIPP
--JUST HOW NEW I AM!

LUTHOR--WHAT IS THIS? WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE--?
LEX LUTHOR IS DEAD, YOU JACKASS! HE DIED IN A FLOOD OF CHEMICALS AND FLAME! HE SUFFERED! HE BURNED--
--AND HE WAS REBORN--
KRAKOW
--AS THE JOKER!
BRUCE?! ADMIT IT--IT'S ME YOU LOVE!
YOU WERE JUST DALLYING WITH THAT WALKING LOAF OF WHITE BREAD TO MAKE ME JEALOUS!
YOU SICK SON OF A--
FRAID NOT.
YOU SEE, I'M LATE--FOR A VERY IMPORTANT DATE!
BRUCE!
SHALL WE GO?
YES--
--I THINK WE SHALL!
NOW, NOW, LOIS--WATCH YOUR LANGUAGE! AFTER ALL, YOU'RE A ROLE MODEL FOR LITTLE GIRLS ALL OVER AMERICA!
LET GO OF ME!
KRRASH

LIKE MY LITTLE FLYING MACHINE, DARLING? I MEAN, WHY SHOULD BATMAN HAVE ALL THE FUN?
LEX-- LEX, WHAT'S HAPPENED TO YOU?
COMPASSION, LOIS--OR A REPORTER'S CURIOSITY?
:SIGH: EITHER WAY, I SUPPOSE THERE'S NO HARM IN TELLING YOU.
MY LITTLE MISHAP AT THE CHEMICAL FACTORY WAS JUST A TAD WORSE THAN THE PRESS RELEASES INDICATED.
TRUTH IS, I WAS REDUCED TO A MASS OF BURNED, SCARRED FLESH.
MY DOCTORS LABORED NIGHT AND DAY... BUT THE BEST THEY COULD DO WAS...
WELL... YOU CAN SEE FOR YOURSELF.
I WAS SOOOO DEPRESSED. LOST INTEREST IN MY BUSINESS. MONEY, POWER--IT ALL MEANT NOTHING TO ME.
FOR MONTHS, I SAT AROUND LIKE A LUMP, EATING TOO MUCH AND WATCHING ENDLESS HOURS OF TELEVISION.
BELIEVE ME, THERE'S JUST SO MUCH "WHEEL OF FORTUNE" A MAN CAN TAKE.
ANYWAY... AS TIME PASSED... I BEGAN TO UNDERSTAND WHAT HAD HAPPENED... SEE IT IN A NEW LIGHT. NOT AS AN ENDING... BUT A BEGINNING.
YOU KNOW BETTER THAN MOST HOW LONG I'D WORN AN UNCOMFORTABLE MASK OF RESPECTABILITY--
--WHILE MY TRUE SELF HID IN THE SHADOWS ...MANIPULATING AND MANEUVERING.
NOT ANY MOOOORE!

YOU SEE I'M READY--AT LONG LAST--TO BRING MY DARKNESS OUT INTO THE WORLD... FOR EVERYONE TO SEE!
AND GOTHAM IS JUST THE PLACE FOR MY "COMING OUT" PARTY, DON'T YOU THINK?
I MEAN METROPOLIS IS TOO SHINY AND CLEAN. TOO DECENT AND KIND. BUT HERE--
--EVEN THE BUILDINGS REFLECT THE ROT IN THE HUMAN SOUL!
OH, THIS IS MY KIND OF TOWN, LOIS! GOTHAM WILL BE MY KINGDOM--
--AND YOU--O OBJECT OF MY MIDNIGHT PASSIONS--WILL BE MY SWEET QUEEN.
BY MY SIDE... ALWAYS... TO REIGN OVER MAGGOTS AND MADNESS, DISEASE AND DEATH.
YOU'RE OUT OF YOUR MIND!
NATURALLY!
ISN'T--
LET THE WOMAN GO.
--EVERYONE?
AH... FACE TO FACE AT LAST!
YOU'VE BEEN QUITE A THORN IN MY SIDE--
--DAMMING UP MY FLOW OF ARMS AND MONEY--
--BUT, HAPPILY, YOU HAVEN'T DONE ANY PERMANENT--
RRAKKK
--DAMAGE...?
I'M NOT DONE YET.



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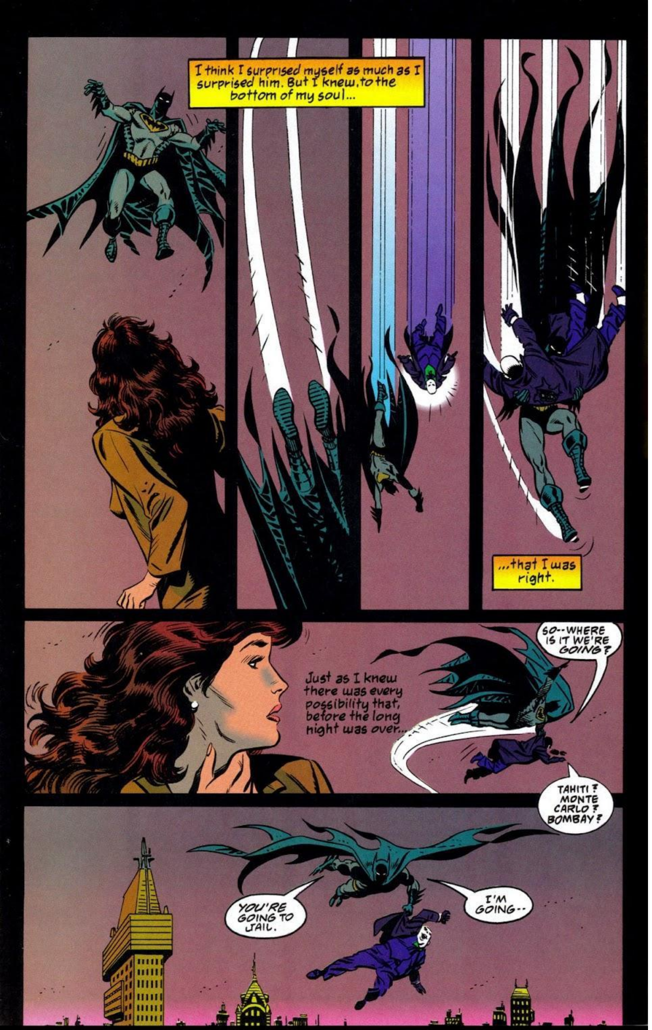

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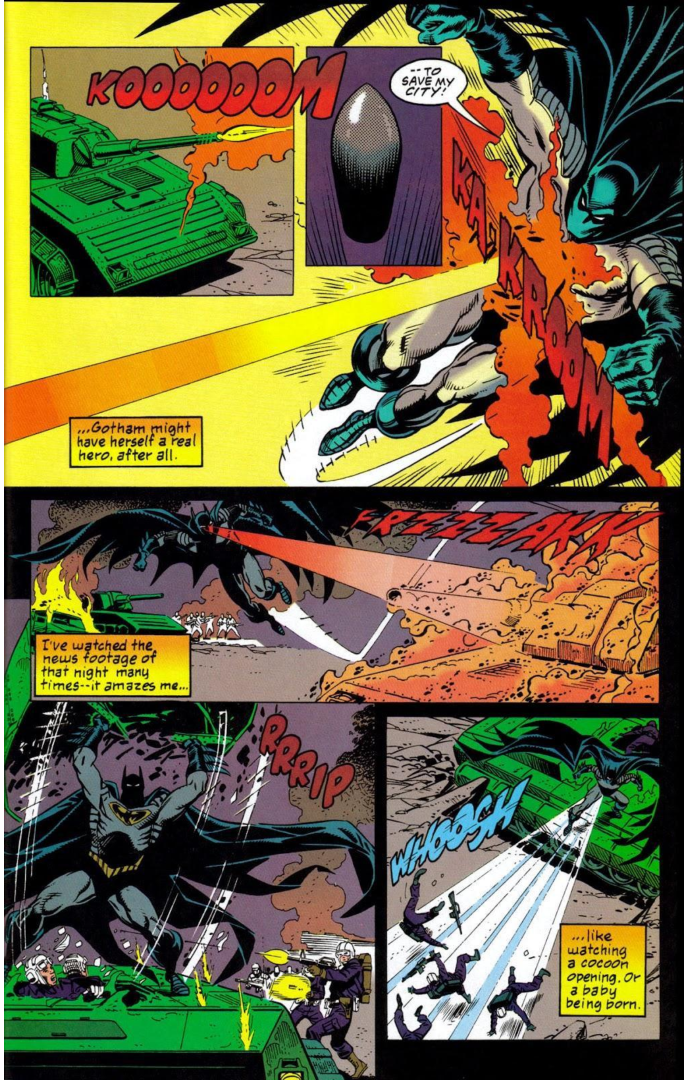

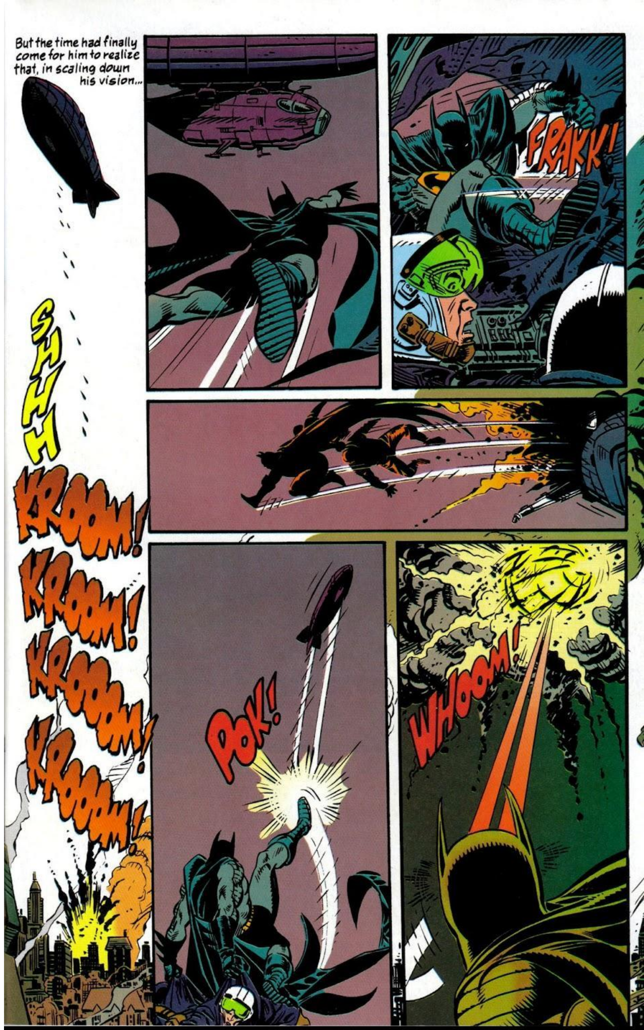

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...he'd scaled down his soul.
WHAT YOU DID TONIGHT... IT WAS DIFFERENT.
NOT HATE... NOT VINDICTIVENESS--
--NOT WASTING YOUR GIFTS ON TERROR AND BRUTALITY.
WITH YOUR POWER--THERE'S SO MUCH MORE YOU CAN DO.
INSTEAD OF FLEXING YOUR MUSCLES... STOOPING TO THE LEVEL OF THE VERY PEOPLE YOU'RE TRYING TO STOP--
--YOU CAN RISE ABOVE ALL THAT. STAND AS AN EXAMPLE.
A SYMBOL OF HOPE.
I... DON'T HAVE IT IN ME TO DO THAT. BE THAT.
THE BATMAN DOESN'T.
BUT BRUCE WAYNE DOES.
When did I realize it? Maybe not till that moment.
Or maybe I knew all along. Does it really matter?
What's important is that he understood. He believed.
In himself.
In the man of decency and high ideals that I fell in love with...

...and who loved me with all his heart.
Sometimes I think about how differently it could have turned out.
How something as simple as a shifting wind current might have carried that rocket anywhere in the world.
It could have been a Zulu chieftain that found him in a fiery crater--or a Chinese peasant. Why not some fascist dictator...
...or a Kansas farmer?
Scenario after scenario unreels in my mind--and I panic at the mere thought that I might never have known him...
...that our troubled world might have been denied her greatest hero.
Inevitably I laugh and push my foolish fantasies aside--secure in the knowledge that there's only one way it could have happened...
...only one series of events that could have given us...

SUPERMAN
THE END

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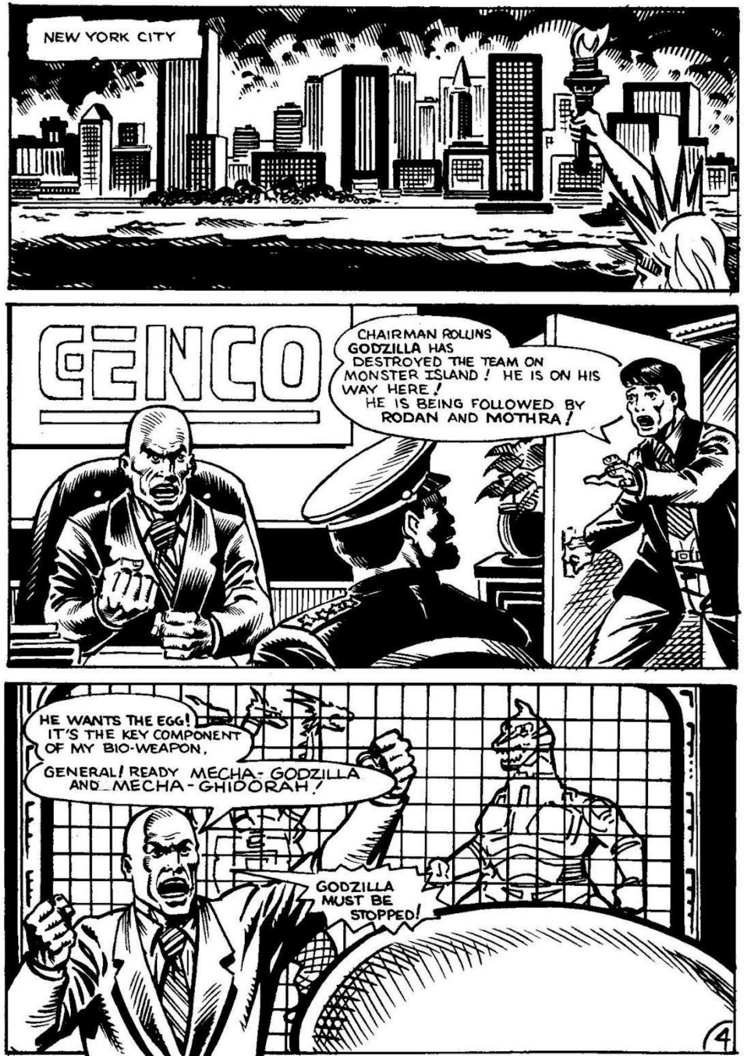
. . . ONCE AGAIN!
GENCO
SUCCESS IS NEAR, SCULLEY! THE MONSTER DNA WITHIN THAT MOUNTAIN IS THE FINAL PIECE OF THE PUZZLE. WHEN WE COMBINE IT WITH OUR GODZILLA EGG IN NEW YORK GENCO INC. WILL HAVE CREATED THE ULTIMATE BIO-WEAPON
YES, A WEAPON FOR WHICH WE CAN DEMAND ANY PRICE!
GENCO
GODZILLA!
NO!! OUR REPORTS INSISTED HE WAS DORMANT
STOP HIM!
2

SKREEONGK
AWAKEND FROM THEIR SLEEP, THE CENTURY-OLD MONSTERS SEEK REVENGE ON THOSE WHO WOULD DESTROY THEIR ISLAND! GODZILLA, RODAN, AND MOTHRA WREAK HAVOC UPON THE CARELESS, GREEDY FOOLS. THEN . . . .
CHBOOM
GODZILLA SENSES HIS EGG IS IN DANGER!
3



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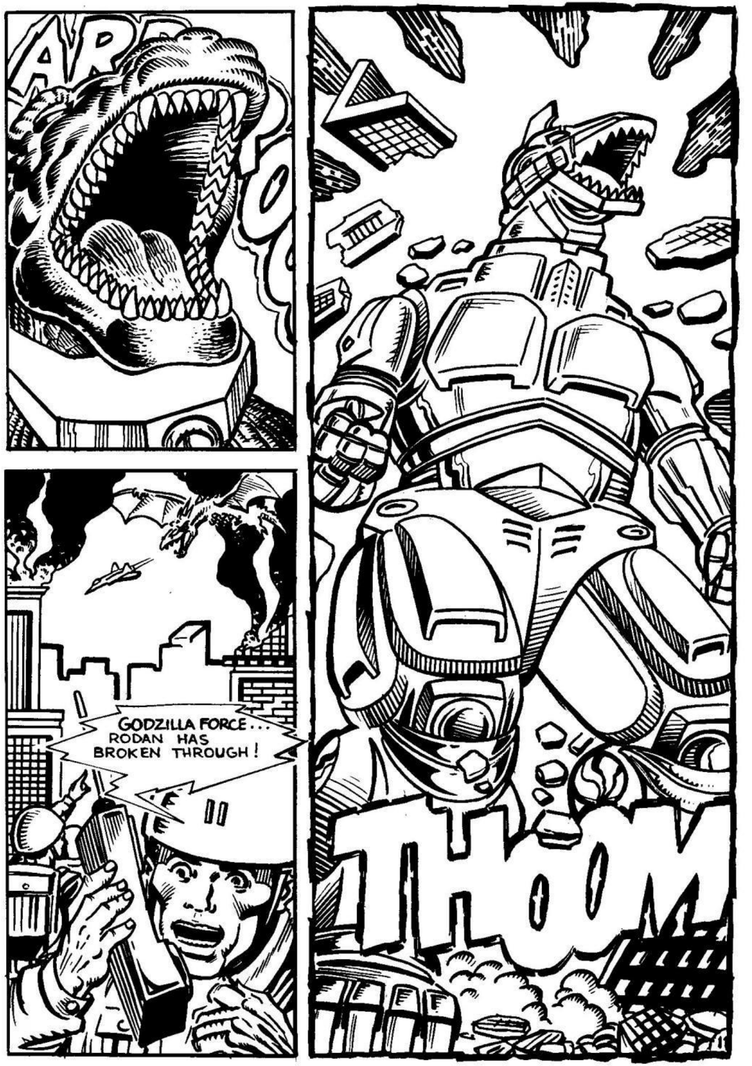
SKREEONK!
KA-CHOW!
KACHOW!
KACHOW!
DIRECT HIT!
GODZILLA IS DOWN!
BUT NOT OUT.
SHBOOM!

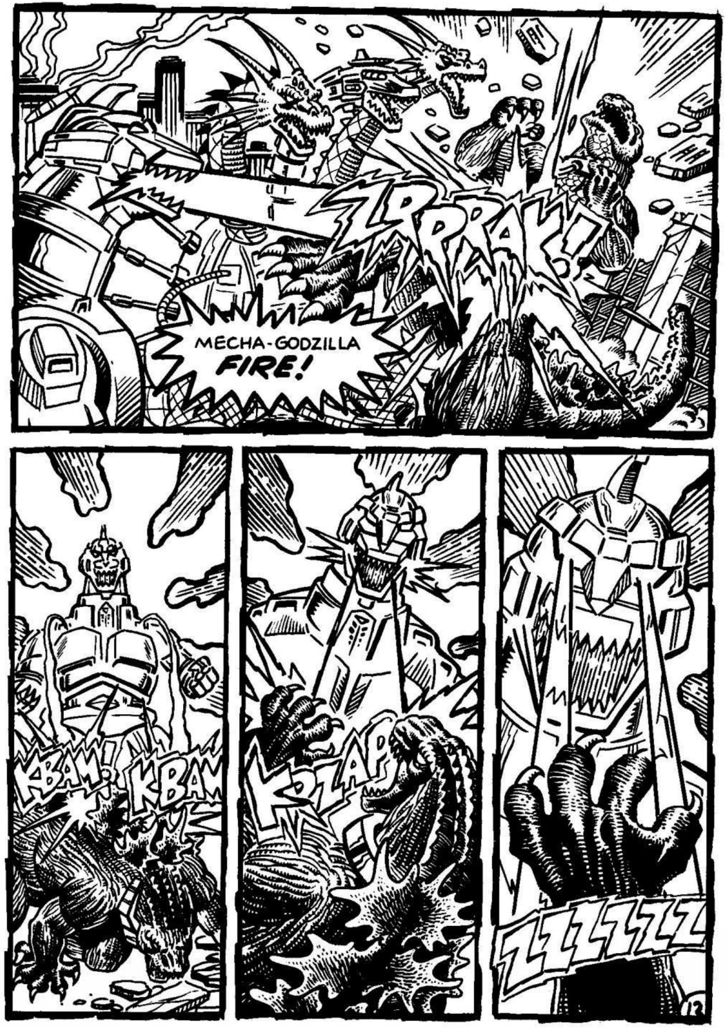
THE MONSTERS COME ASHORE AT BATTERY PARK, MAKING THEIR WAY TOWARD THE GENCO HQ IN TIMES SQUARE.
GODZILLA FORCE, THIS IS BLUE LEADER; WE CAN'T HOLD THEM OFF .... PREPARE FOR ENGAGEMENT!
!!

SKREEONGK!
8

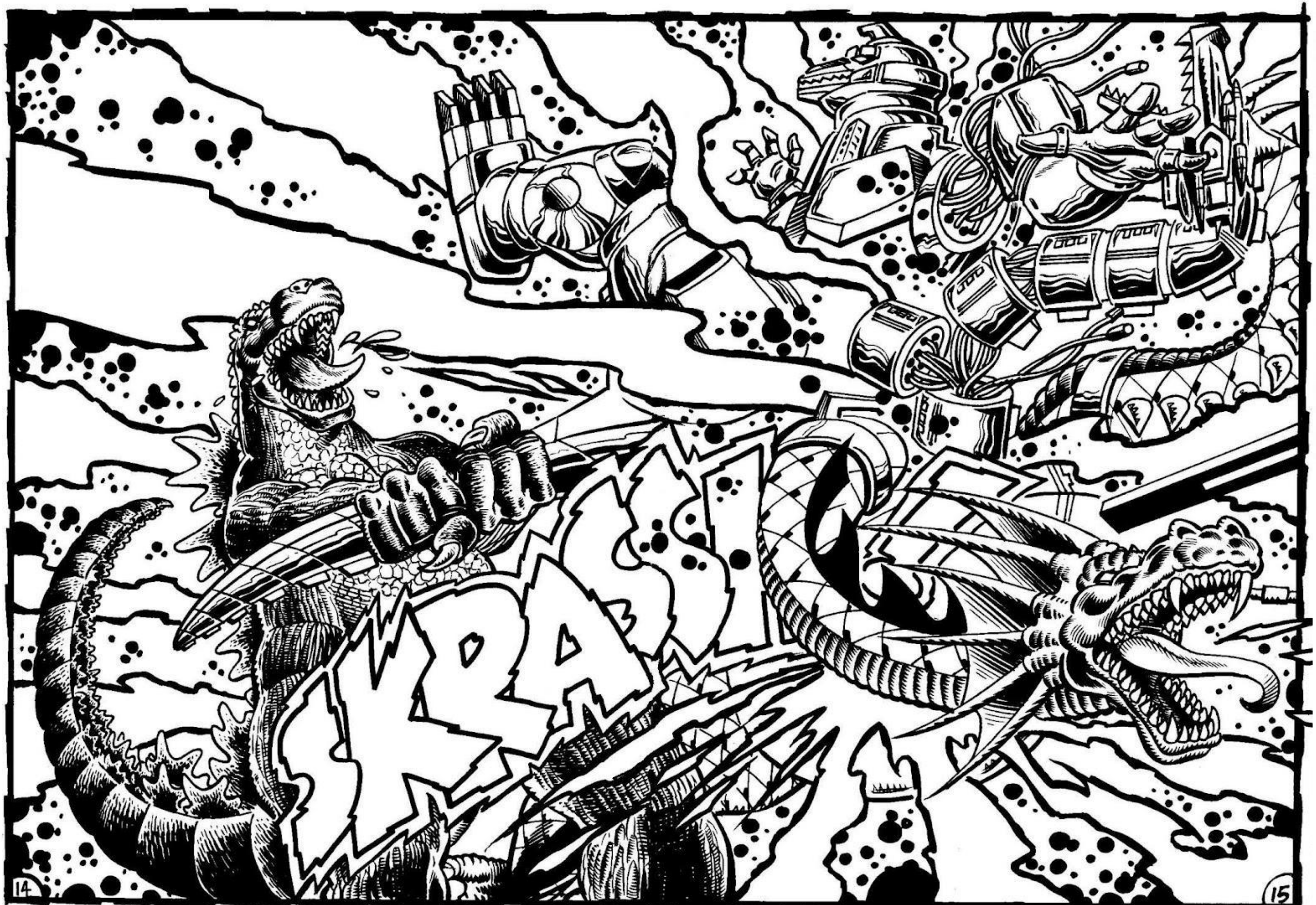
BARAK!
CLAMP!
CLAMP!
9

ZAKOW!
KWAP!
KWAP!
GODZILLA FORCE'S GARUDA SHIP ATTACKS RODAN HEAD ON!


GODZILLA FORCE... RODAN HAS BROKEN THROUGH!
THOOM


ZDPRAK!
MECHA-GODZILLA FIRE!
KBAM! KBAM
KZZAP
ZZZZZZZ

GODZILLA FORCE REPORTING..... SITUATION UNDER CONTROL!
NOT!


SKRASS

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KING OF THE MONSTERS

He began life as a Godzillasaurus—millions of years ago when dinosaurs roamed the Earth. Exposed to radiation in the mid 1950's, Godzilla—as he came to be called—transformed into a towering monster capable of delivering a devastating atomic blast with his breath. Since then, Godzilla has menaced the cities of Japan and fought off many seemingly unbeatable adversaries, earning him the title, "The King of the Monsters".

MOTHRA™

Hatched from an egg that fell from space, Mothra fires an ultra-sonic wave beam from his antennae of considerable destructive force, and the poisonous powder stored in his wings can temporarily paralyze the muscles in Godzilla's body, and neutralize Godzilla's atomic blast.

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Rodan is believed to be the last remaining Pterodactyl. The fastest of all the monsters, Rodan can fly at speeds in excess of Mach 5, creating intense sonic booms; shockwaves from which can destroy anything in it's path.

GHIDORAH™

Engineered by The Earth Union Organization in the year 2204 as a bio-weapon with which to destroy Japan, three Dorats were sent back in time to the 1940's where they fused into the three-headed Ghidorah! But the EUO's plan to destroy Japan was soon put to an end by the mighty Godzilla!

MECHA-GHIDORAH™

After a losing battle with Godzilla, Ghidorah lay at the bottom of the ocean. The Earth Union Organization salvaged the battered bio-weapon and gave it new life as Mecha-Ghidorah—an even more powerful Cyber-Monster—and returned him back in time to face Godzilla!

MECHA-GODZILLA™

In 1992, the Godzilla Force recovered the remains of the decimated Mecha-Ghidorah. Learning the secrets of this advanced Cyber-Weapon, the Godzilla-Force built the amazing Mecha-Godzilla to defend Japan against Godzilla's attacks.

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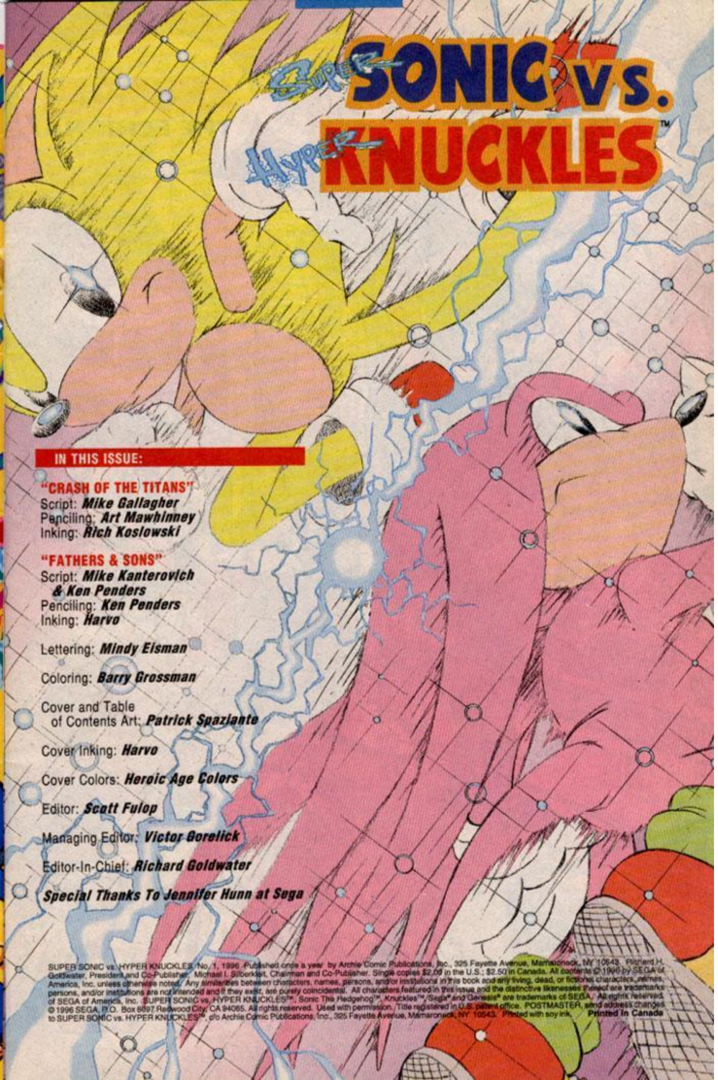

IN THIS ISSUE:

"CRASH OF THE TITANS"
Script: ***Mike Gallagher***
Penciling: ***Art Mawhinney***
Inking: ***Rich Koslowski***

"FATHERS & SONS"
Script: ***Mike Kanterovich & Ken Penders***
Penciling: ***Ken Penders***
Inking: ***Harvo***

Lettering: ***Mindy Eisman***

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Cover Inking: ***Harvo***

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Special Thanks To Jennifer Hunn at Sega

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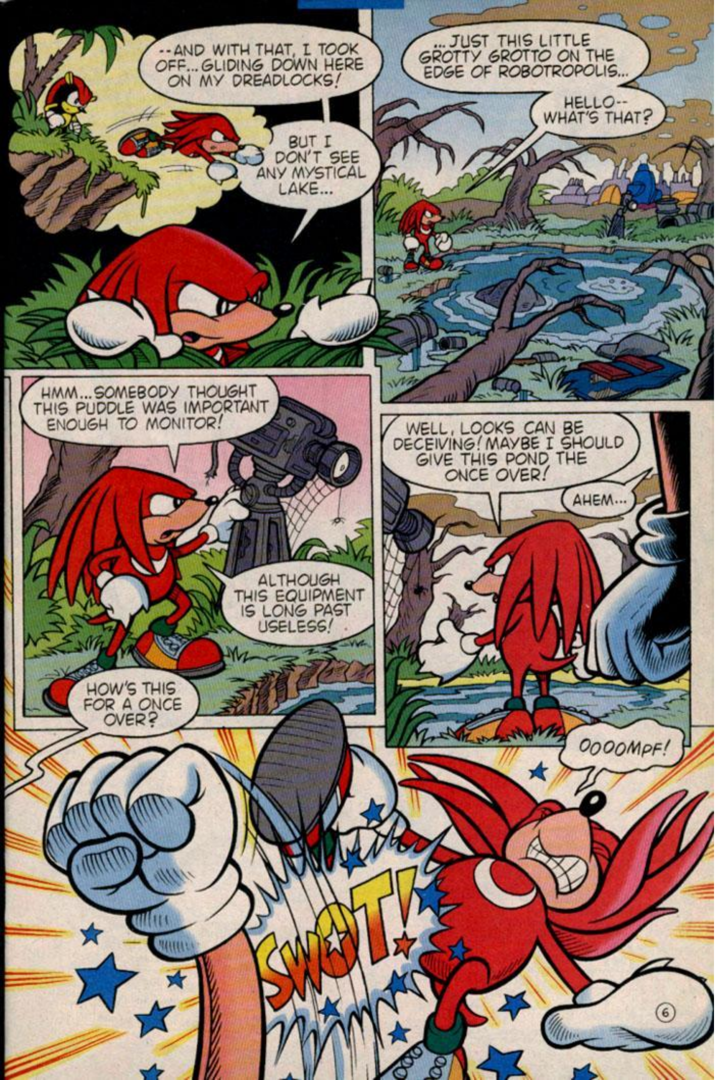
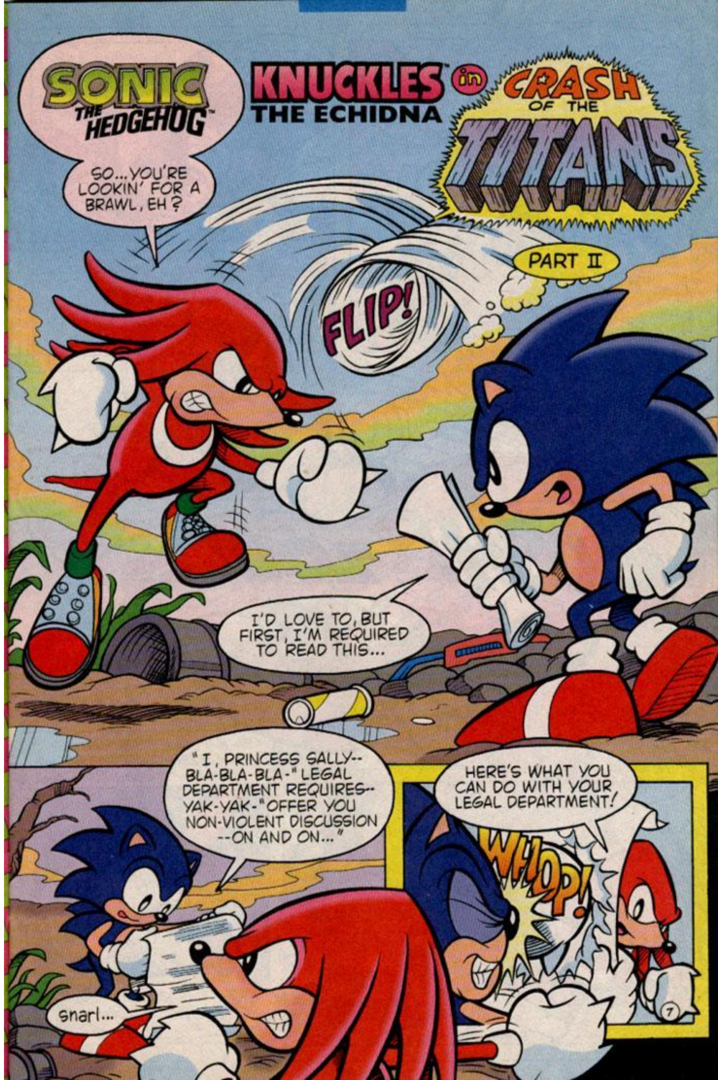
I'M AFRAID SO... HE'S WALKING ALONG THE OUTER EDGE OF THE GREAT FOREST!
THAT'S WHERE WE TANGLED LAST!*
I MET HIS GREAT GRAND-FATHER!**
BUT HE NEVER LEAVES HIS FLOATING ISLAND HOME!
*IN SONIC TRIPLE TROUBLE - Scott
**IN THE RECENTLY COMPLETED TAILS MINI-SERIES -- Mini Scott
GRRRR... THAT DREADLOCKER MAKES MY SPINES TINGLE! HE'S UP TO NO GOOD!
I'LL SHOW YOU EXACTLY WHAT HE'S UP TO...
...THE BORDER OF ROBOTROPOLIS!
THE RED SKUNK IS GONNA CUT A DEAL WITH ROBOTNIK!
WE DON'T KNOW THAT, SONIC! I WANT YOU TO GO TALK TO HIM...DID YOU HEAR? TALK!
SKREEEET...
GOTCHA, SALLY...
sigh YEAH, RIGHT... WHAT DO THE ODDS MAKERS SAY?
FOUR TO ONE THEY'RE IN A FIGHT BY PAGE SIX!
2

MEANWHILE...
PHEW! WHAT A DISGUSTING MESS! THESE LANDLUBBERS ARE LIVING PROOF THAT ECHIDNA SOCIETY WAS RIGHT TO ABANDON TECHNOLOGY AND REVERT TO BEING ENVIRONMENT-FRIENDLY!*
*WHAT IS KNUX REFERRING TO? STAY TUNED FOR SOLO KNUCKLES STORIES IN SONIC #'S 34-36 --Scott
"IN FACT, THAT'S THE VERY REASON I'M HERE...JUST AS I WAS SAYING TO MIGHTY THE ARMADILLO, ONE OF THE CHAOTIX..."
I SAW IT HAPPEN! A CHAOS EMERALD BROKEN IN HALF!*
BUT ISN'T THAT IMPOSSIBLE?
*IN THE AFOREMENTIONED TRIPLE TROUBLE ...AFORE Scott
FROM WHAT YOU'VE TOLD ME ABOUT THEM, THOSE GEMSTONES ARE THE ULTIMATE ENERGY SOURCE!
I WAS THERE, MIGHTY! IT CAN HAPPEN...ONLY I WON'T LET IT HAPPEN HERE!
3

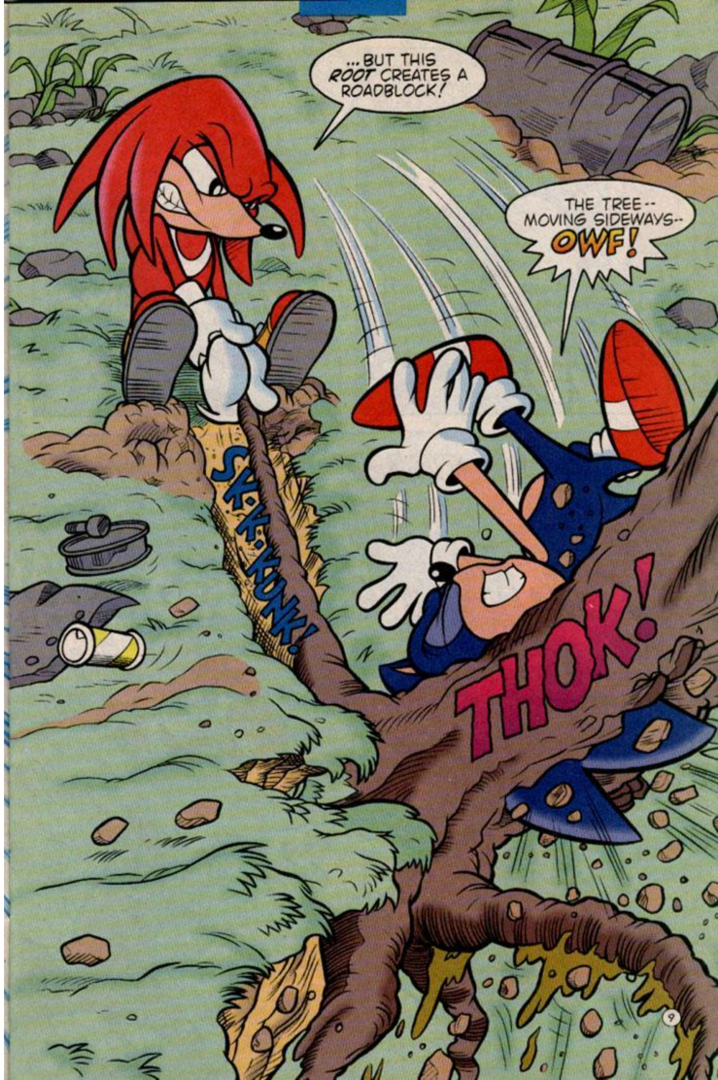
LONG AGO, WHEN MY ANCESTORS RAISED THIS FLOATING ISLAND INTO THE SKY *...
... IT WAS POWERED BY A DOZEN CHAOS EMERALDS... BUT NOT ANYMORE!
*DESCRIBED BY KNUCKLES' GREAT GRANDFATHER, ATHAIR IN ISSUE #3 OF TAILS' MINI-SERIES -SF
"NOW THERE'S ONLY ONE GREEN GEM IN THE CENTRAL CHAMBER -- AND THAT WORRIES ME!"
I'M THE GUARDIAN OF THIS ISLAND! IF THAT LAST EMERALD FAILS, IT COULD SPELL DOOM FOR EVERYONE!
HOW WOULD YOU GET ANOTHER ONE?
A GOOD QUESTION... PERHAPS THE ANSWER LIES IN HERE!
FLIP!
gasp! THE BOOK OF MYTHS!*
*MENTIONED BY KNUCKLES BACK IN "TRIPLE TROUBLE SPECIAL" -Scribe Scott
4

HERE WE ARE... "CHAOS EMERALDS ARE MYSTICALLY LINKED TO THE MAGIC RINGS FOUND INSIDE ZONES!* HOWEVER, LEGENDS SPEAK OF ONE OTHER LOCATION WHERE THEY CAN BE FOUND...
...THE LAKE OF RINGS!
IT IS SAID THE PASTORAL POND CAN SUDDENLY GIVE OFF A GOLDEN GLOW--
--AND A MAGIC RING BREAKS THE SURFACE!
SOME SAY THE RINGS ARE A BY-PRODUCT OF THE EMERALDS... OTHERS SAY IT IS THE OTHER WAY AROUND!
*THE SAME ZONES YOU ENTER WHEN YOU PLAY SEGA'S SONIC VIDEO GAMES -- Sega Scott
LOOK HERE... "THE RING RADIATES COSMIC ENERGY... BUT THE LAKE'S LOCATION IS LOST TO HISTORY!"
MAYBE NOT -- THE KEY WORD IS "RADIATES"!
YOU KNOW THAT SONIC THE HEDGEHOG BATTLES A VILLAIN CALLED ROBOTNIK WHO LIVES IN A RADIOACTIVE CITY CALLED ROBOTROPOLIS!
SO?
Thmf!
SO, WHAT IF THE SOURCE OF THE RADIATION ISN'T POLLUTION? MAYBE THE LAKE OF RINGS IS NEARBY! AND WHERE THERE'S RINGS, THERE COULD BE CHAOS EMERALDS!!!
I GOTTA KNOW! MIND THE ISLAND FOR ME, MIGHTY!
DON'T WORRY! MY MATCHLESS STRENGTH WILL KEEP IT SAFE!
5

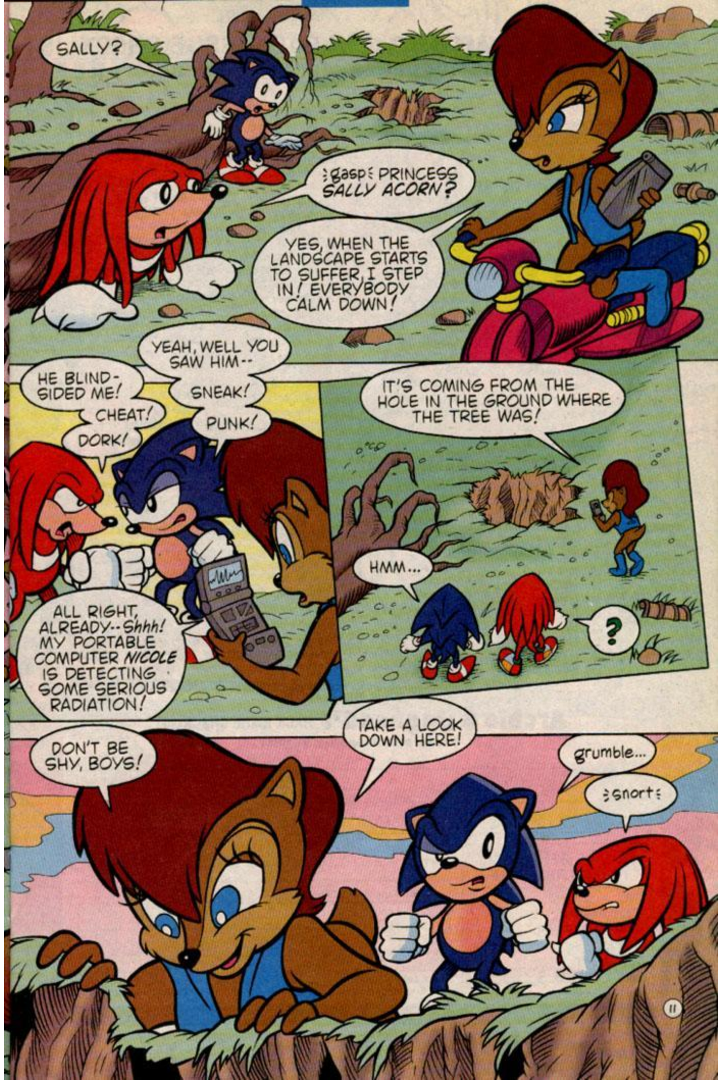

--AND WITH THAT, I TOOK OFF...GLIDING DOWN HERE ON MY DREADLOCKS!
BUT I DON'T SEE ANY MYSTICAL LAKE...
...JUST THIS LITTLE GROTTY GROTTO ON THE EDGE OF ROBOTROPOLIS...
HELLO-- WHAT'S THAT?
HMM...SOMEBODY THOUGHT THIS PUDDLE WAS IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO MONITOR!
ALTHOUGH THIS EQUIPMENT IS LONG PAST USELESS!
WELL, LOOKS CAN BE DECEIVING! MAYBE I SHOULD GIVE THIS POND THE ONCE OVER!
AHEM...
HOW'S THIS FOR A ONCE OVER?
OOOOMPF!
SWOT!
6


SONIC THE HEDGEHOG™
KNUCKLES™ THE ECHIDNA
in
CRASH OF THE TITANS
PART II
SO...YOU'RE LOOKIN' FOR A BRAWL, EH?
FLIP!
I'D LOVE TO, BUT FIRST, I'M REQUIRED TO READ THIS...
"I, PRINCESS SALLY-- BLA-BLA-BLA-" LEGAL DEPARTMENT REQUIRES-- YAK-YAK-"OFFER YOU NON-VIOLENT DISCUSSION --ON AND ON..."
snarl...
HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DO WITH YOUR LEGAL DEPARTMENT!
WHOP!
7

OKAY, REDBONE... YOU ASKED FOR IT!...
C'MON, LITTLE BOY BLUE... I'M STANDING HERE!
NOT FOR LONG...
?
VVMMMM
THIS IS MY FIGURE EIGHT MOVE!* HOW DO YOU LIKE IT?
WHOOSH!
ZOK!
OWW!... I 8 IT!
* WHICH SONIC FIRST USED IN ISSUE #25 TO DEFEAT MECHA-SONIC -- Mecha Scott
WOO-HA! HE'S STILL MOVING!
I'LL CIRCLE THIS TREE AND WHACK HIM AGAIN!
I SEE THE ROUTE YOU'RE TAKING, HOG...
8


... BUT THIS ROOT CREATES A ROADBLOCK!
THE TREE-- MOVING SIDEWAYS-- OWF!
SK-K-KUNK!
THOK!
9

STUCK IN THE TREE? I ALWAYS SAID YOU WERE A LITTLE SAP!
MMMMF! AW, PUT A SOCK IN IT, KNUCKLES!
YOU PUT A SOCK IN IT! I VISIT A PUBLIC PLACE AND YOU AMBUSH ME!
NNNGH!
BY YANKING THE TREE BY THE ROOTS, HE LOOSENED IT...
TIMBER!
WHUMP!
AGH!!
HOLD IT RIGHT THERE --BOTH OF YOU!
10


SALLY?
gasp PRINCESS SALLY ACORN?
YES, WHEN THE LANDSCAPE STARTS TO SUFFER, I STEP IN! EVERYBODY CALM DOWN!
YEAH, WELL YOU SAW HIM--
HE BLIND-SIDED ME!
SNEAK!
CHEAT!
PUNK!
DORK!
ALL RIGHT, ALREADY--Shhh! MY PORTABLE COMPUTER NICOLE IS DETECTING SOME SERIOUS RADIATION!
IT'S COMING FROM THE HOLE IN THE GROUND WHERE THE TREE WAS!
HMM...
?
DON'T BE SHY, BOYS!
TAKE A LOOK DOWN HERE!
grumble...
snort
11

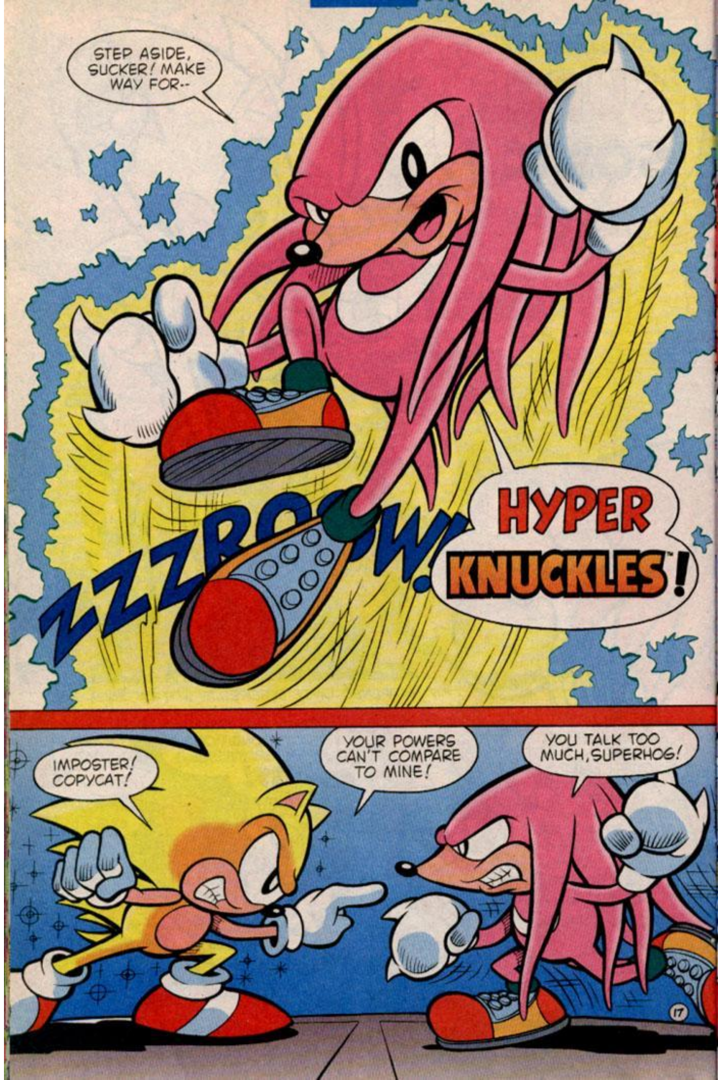
SONIC & KNUCKLES--
in
CRASH OF THE TITANS
PART III
CHECK IT OUT... IT'S A GATEWAY TO AN UNKNOWN ZONE!*
MAJOR!
LOOK AT IT... SWIMMING WITH MAGIC RINGS AND CHAOS EMERALDS!
* THE SAME TYPE OF ACTION ZONES FOUND IN ALL SONIC GAMES--"Action" Scott
KNUCKLES-- WAIT!
SORRY, SALLY-- I'M GOING FOR IT!
HEY! YOU ROTTEN--
12

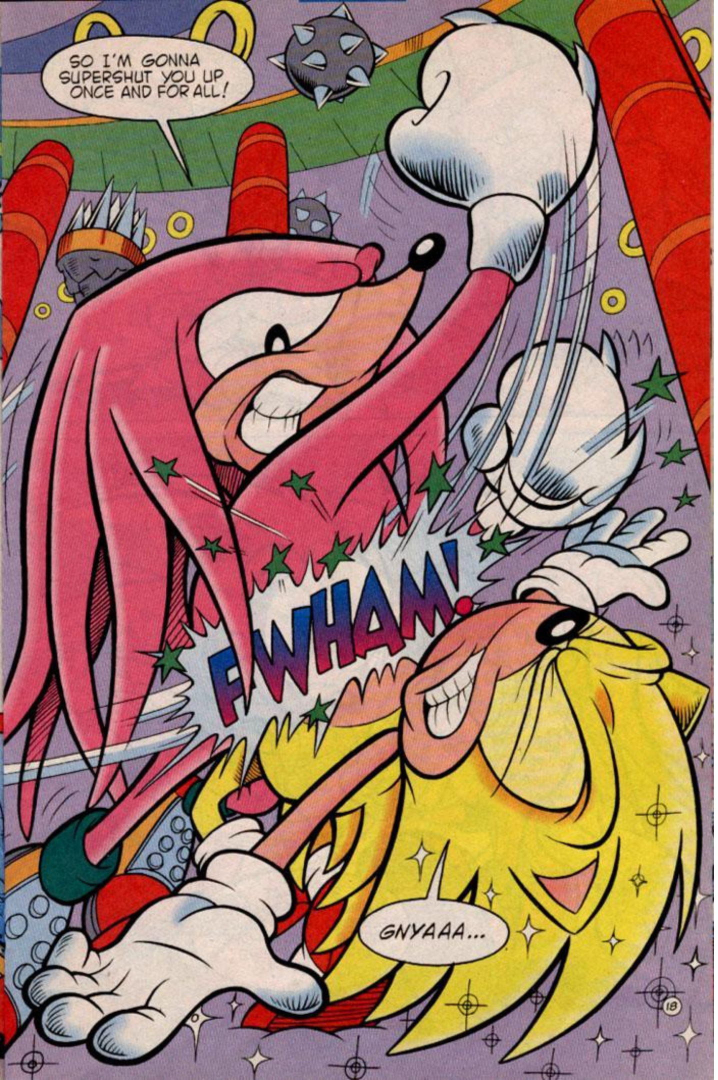
groan GO AFTER HIM, SONIC! sigh HE HASN'T CHANGED SINCE WE USED TO SPEND SUMMERS TOGETHER!
YES MA'AM YOUR MAJES--
HUH?
PARDON ME...DID YOU JUST SAY SOMETHING ABOUT SPENDING TIME WITH KNUCKLES?
HMM?
SONIC, I REALLY DON'T THINK THAT'S YOUR CONCERN!
WELL, I JUST-- ahem! I MEAN...Y'KNOW-- gulp YOU AND ME...
GET ON HIS TRAIL, MISTER! THAT'S AN ORDER!
oop! YES'M!
chuckle HE CARES!
chuckle SHE CARES!
13

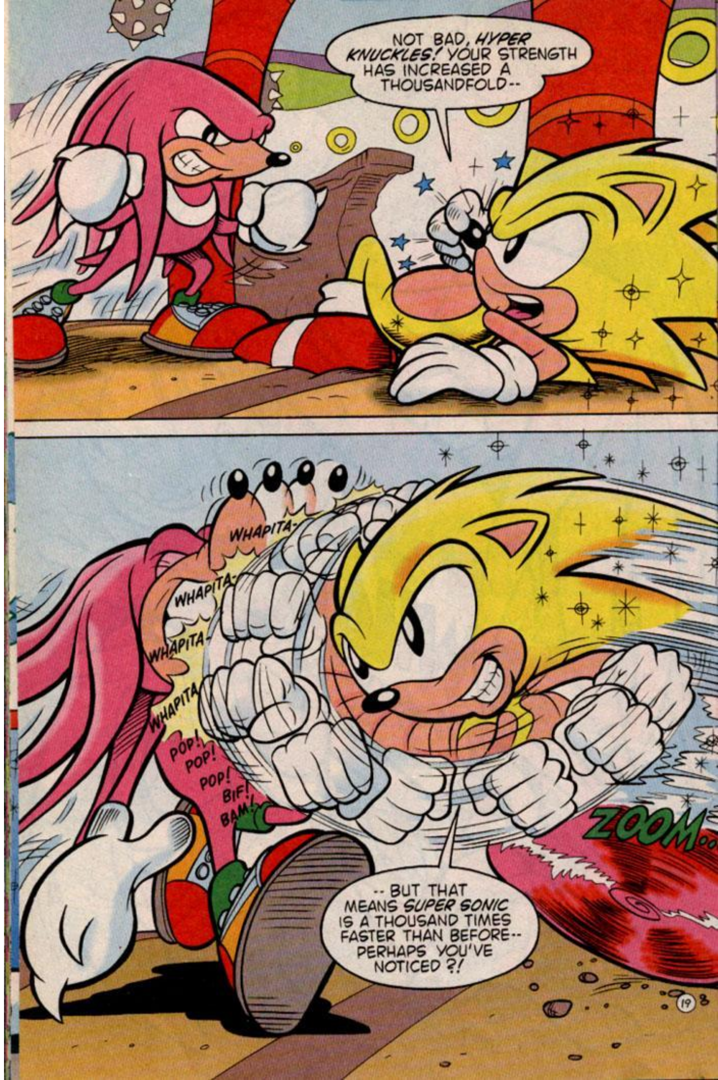
GIVE IT UP, KNUCKLEBRAIN! YOU GOT A HEAD START, BUT I'M FASTER THAN YOU!
BLOW IT OUT YOUR SNEAKERS, YOU BLUE BOZO!!! I'M PICKING THIS JOINT CLEAN!
14

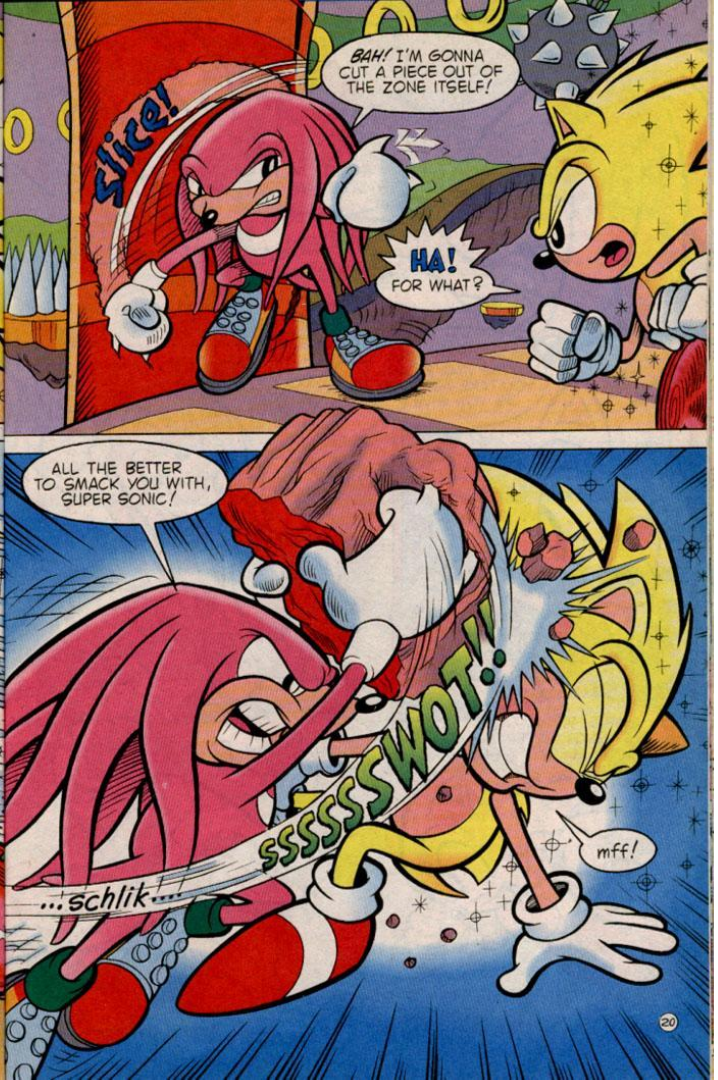
THAT ECHIDNA IS PERSISTENT! LOOKS LIKE I'VE GOTTA USE EXTREME MEASURES!
COME TO POPPA!
IT'S THE ONLY WAY...
GERONIMO!
AS KNUX SAID, THIS ZONE'S RICH IN RINGS AND EMERALDS...
...BY JUICIN' TO TOP SPEED AND RUNNING OVER HIM, I'LL HIT THE MAGIC NUMBERS--
VA VA VROOM
D-BUMP!
WHOOAF!
...AND THOSE NUMBERS ARE: FIFTY MAGIC RINGS -- AND-- SEVEN CHAOS EMERALDS...
grumble
15

...CHANGING ME INTO...
SUPER SONIC™!
gulp!
CRACKLE
*IT HAPPENED ONCE BEFORE...IN STH #4 -Super Scott
SEVEN AND FIFTY, EH? OKAY-- I GOT ENOUGH EMERALDS... I'M FOUR RINGS SHORT!
OKAY, LITTLE GUY, THE GIG'S UP!
YOUR UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER WILL BE--
HEY!
MAKE THAT--
THREE...
TWO...
ONE...
BINGO!
16

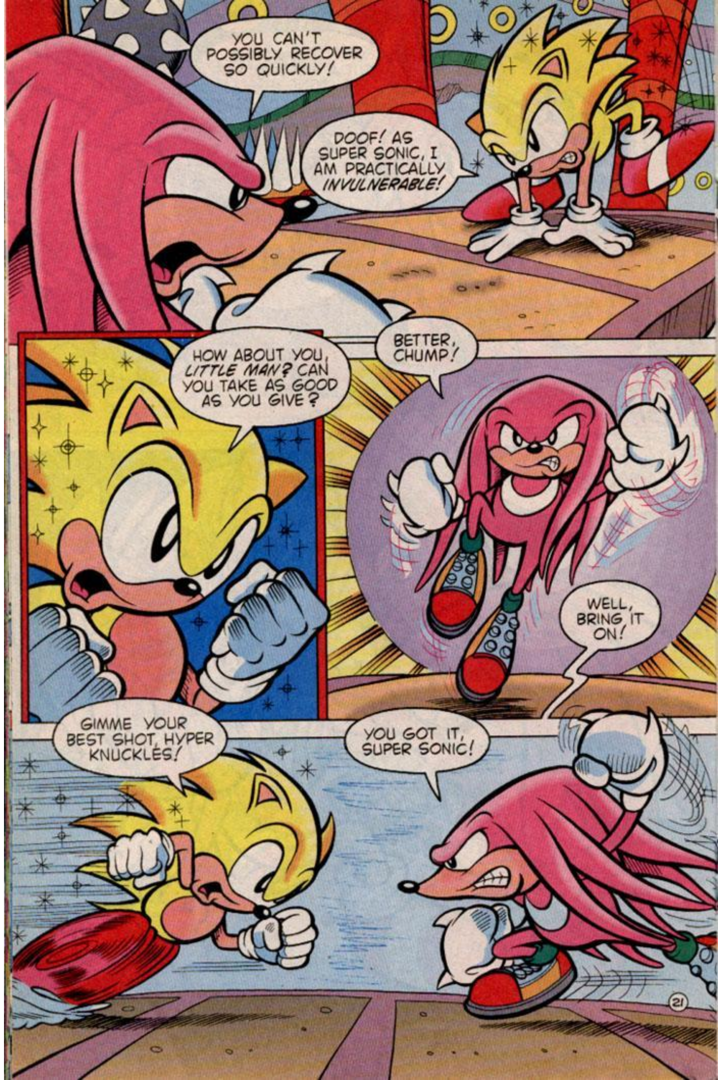

STEP ASIDE, SUCKER! MAKE WAY FOR--
ZZZROOW!
HYPER KNUCKLES™!
IMPOSTER! COPYCAT!
YOUR POWERS CAN'T COMPARE TO MINE!
YOU TALK TOO MUCH, SUPERHOG!
17


SO I'M GONNA SUPERSHUT YOU UP ONCE AND FOR ALL!
FWHAM!
GNYAAA...
18

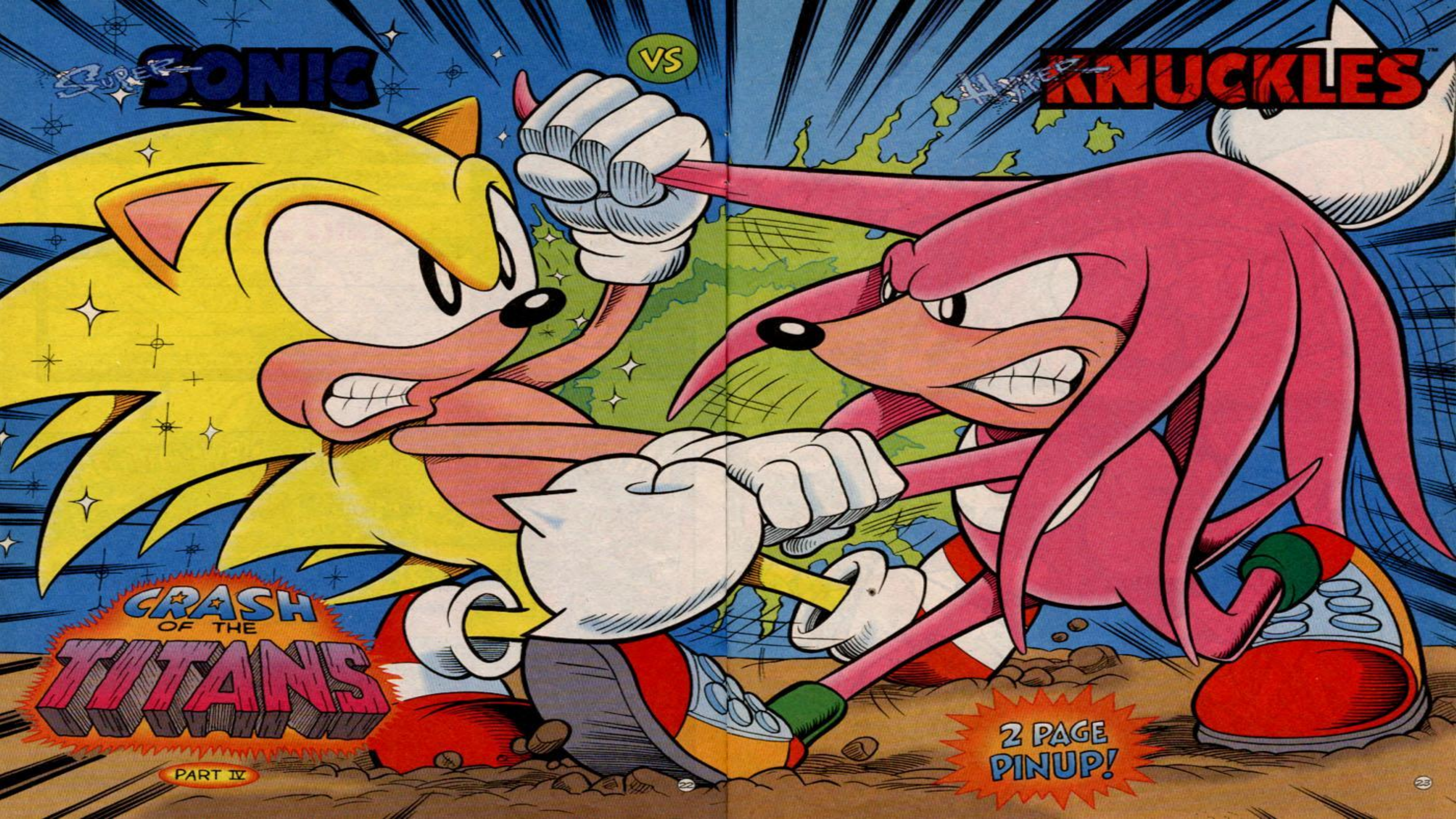

NOT BAD, *HYPER KNUCKLES!* YOUR STRENGTH HAS INCREASED A THOUSANDFOLD--
WHAPITA-
WHAPITA-
WHAPITA-
WHAPITA
POP! POP! POP! BIF! BAM!
ZOOM..
-- BUT THAT MEANS *SUPER SONIC* IS A THOUSAND TIMES FASTER THAN BEFORE-- PERHAPS YOU'VE NOTICED?!
19



BAH! I'M GONNA CUT A PIECE OUT OF THE ZONE ITSELF!
slice!
HA! FOR WHAT?
ALL THE BETTER TO SMACK YOU WITH, SUPER SONIC!
SSSSSSWOT!!
mff!
...schlik...
20

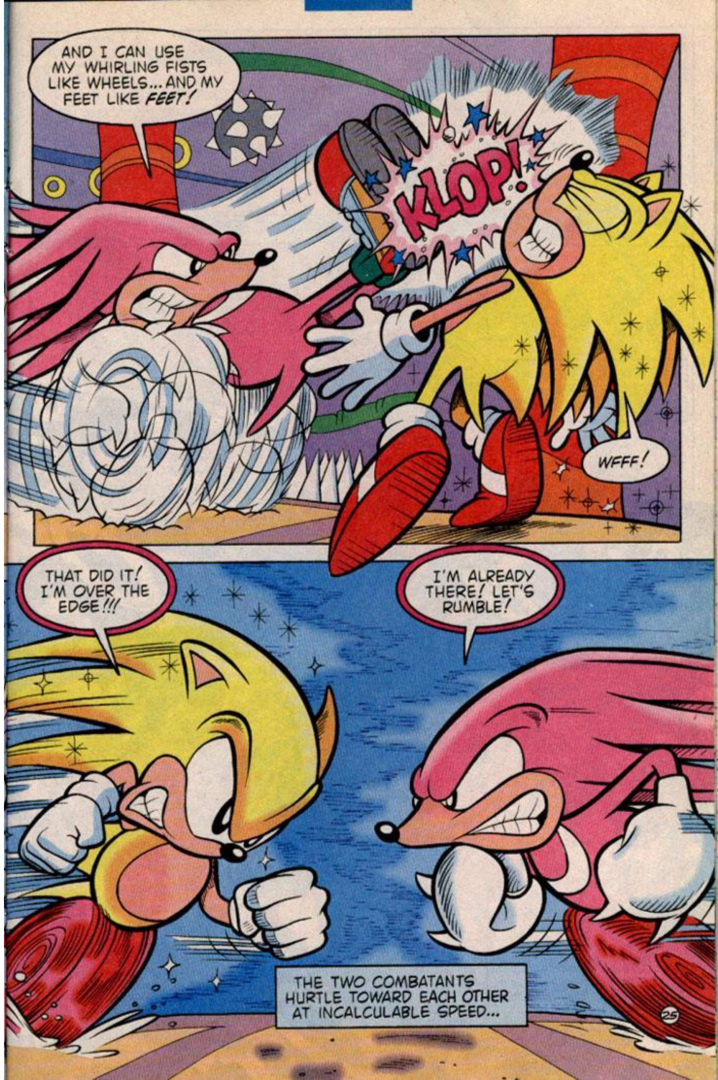


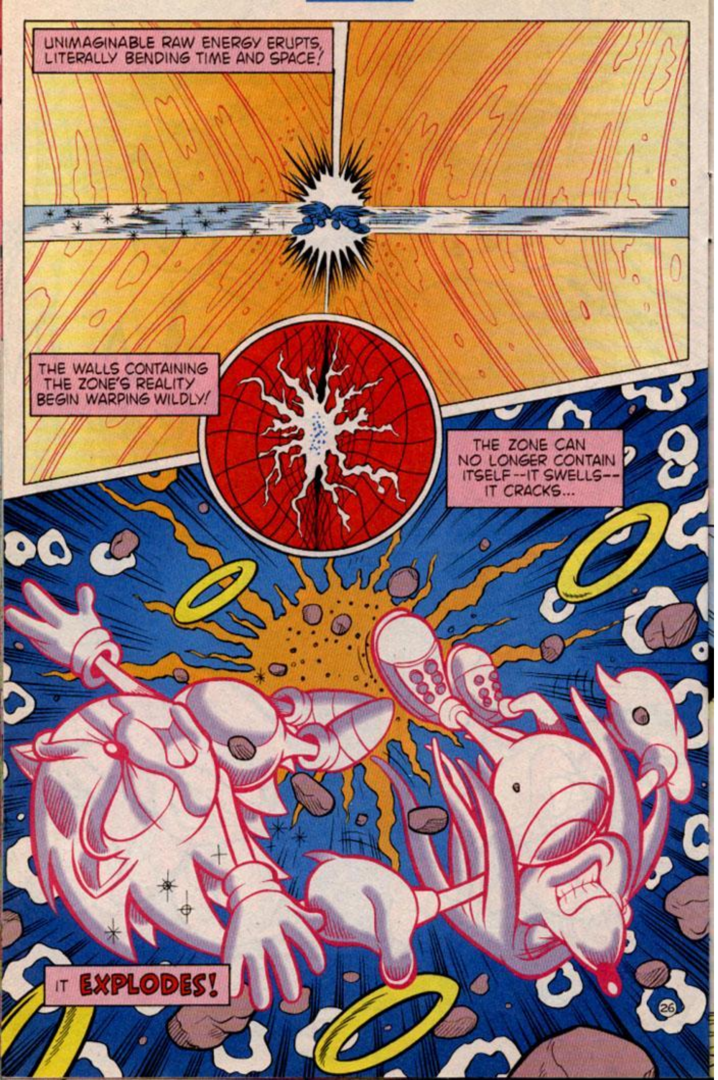
YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY RECOVER SO QUICKLY!
DOOF! AS SUPER SONIC, I AM PRACTICALLY *INVULNERABLE!*
HOW ABOUT YOU, *LITTLE MAN?* CAN YOU TAKE AS GOOD AS YOU GIVE?
BETTER, CHUMP!
WELL, BRING IT ON!
GIMME YOUR BEST SHOT, HYPER KNUCKLES!
YOU GOT IT, SUPER SONIC!
21



Super SONIC
VS
Hyper KNUCKLES
CRASH OF THE TITANS
PART IV
2 PAGE PINUP!

BAH! IS THAT ALL YOU'VE GOT? GET AWAY FROM ME WITH THAT *SUPER SPIN DASH!*
SHRING!
YOU CAN'T STOP ME THAT EASILY!
WZZZZ...
YOU'RE COMING IN COUNTER-CLOCK-WISE...THAT'S UNWISE!
ZWWW...
AAGH! HE REVERSED ME!
ZANG!
BUT I CAN USE THE BACKWARD MOMENTUM TO ACHIEVE A SUPER FIGURE EIGHT!
WHURG!
BUKA!
NYOWM...
24

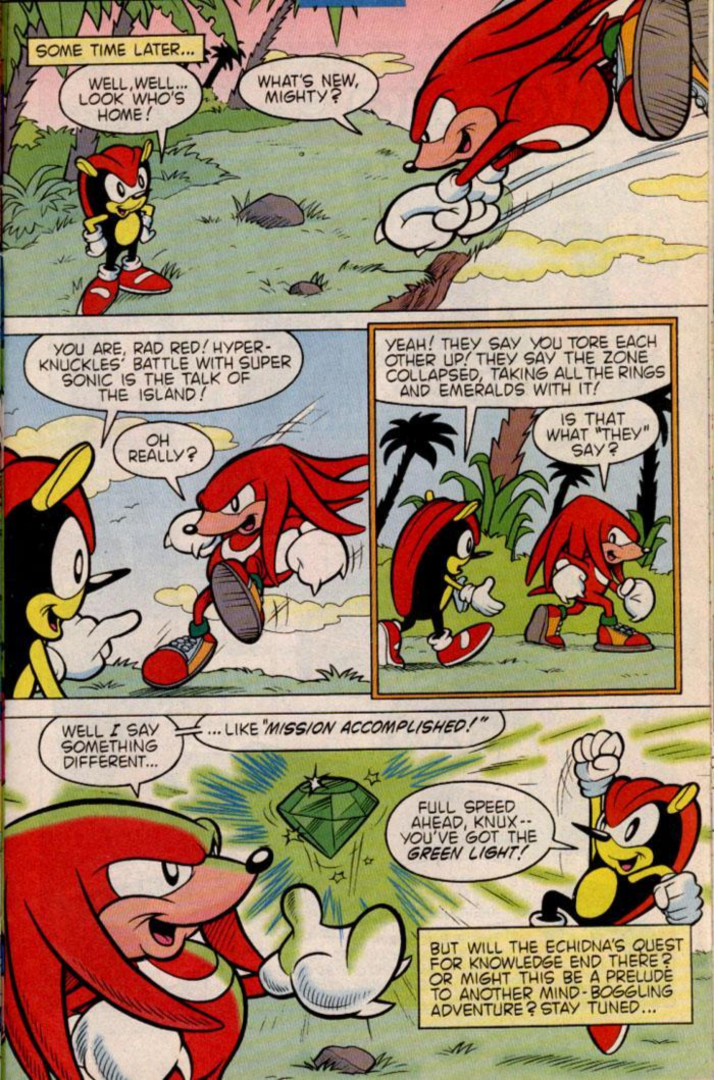

AND I CAN USE MY WHIRLING FISTS LIKE WHEELS... AND MY FEET LIKE *FEET!*
KLOP!
WFFF!
THAT DID IT! I'M OVER THE EDGE!!!
I'M ALREADY THERE! LET'S RUMBLE!
THE TWO COMBATANTS HURTLE TOWARD EACH OTHER AT INCALCULABLE SPEED...
25

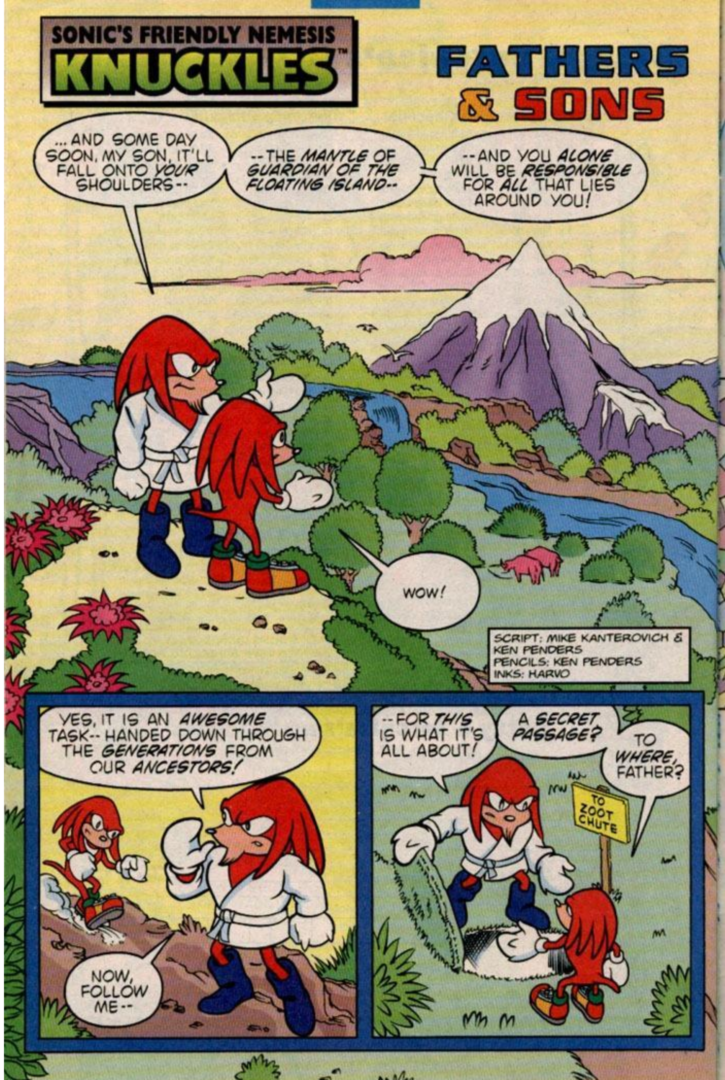

UNIMAGINABLE RAW ENERGY ERUPTS, LITERALLY BENDING TIME AND SPACE!
THE WALLS CONTAINING THE ZONE'S REALITY BEGIN WARPING WILDLY!
THE ZONE CAN NO LONGER CONTAIN ITSELF--IT SWELLS--IT CRACKS...
IT EXPLODES!

NEARBY...
MY LORD OF LARD... IT IS AN EARTHQUAKE!
NO, IT'S SOMETHING QUITE DIFFERENT... OBSERVE!
ENERGY OUTPUT READINGS ARE OFF THE SCALE! DISPERSION OF CONTENTS IRRETRIEVABLE!
THIS IS TERRIBLE!
YOU MEAN BECAUSE OF THE POTENTIAL LOSS OF MAGIC RINGS AND CHAOS EMERALDS?
NO, I MEAN BECAUSE THIS IS A 48-PAGE SPECIAL, AND ALL I GET IS A ONE-PAGE CAMEO! SOMEONE IS GOING TO PAY DEARLY FOR THIS!
CRUNKLE!
GET MY AGENT ON THE PHONE!

NOT FAR AWAY...
WOO-HA! ANYBODY GET THE NUMBER ON THAT COSMIC BUS?
EASY, SONIC...
HUH?.. WHO-- SALLY! WHAT'RE YOU DOING IN THE ZONE?
THANKS TO YOU, THAT ZONE'S BEEN OBLITERATED!
THERE'S NO TRACE OF IT--
--NO EMERALDS--
--NO RINGS--
NOTHING! ZERO! NADA! ZIP!
YOU WERE BLOWN FREE AND LANDED HERE... BACK TO NORMAL!
I DON'T FEEL NORMAL... AND WHERE'S "HERE?"
RIGHT NEXT TO THE LAKE OF RINGS...
...WHERE SOME PEOPLE THINK OUR MONITOR ISN'T WORKING!
THAT'S A GREAT CAMOUFLAGE JOB!
wink!
28

SO YOU SAW WHAT HAPPENED?
YES--FROM KNOTHOLE CONTROL!
AFTER YOU GUYS ENTERED THE ZONE, I REJOINED TAILS WHO WAS MONITORING YOUR PROGRESS! SUDDENLY, WE SAW IT BLOWN TO BITS!
"WE WATCHED AS THE VERY FABRIC OF REALITY TORE APART, EJECTING YOU TWO MANIACS!
"YOU LANDED RIGHT NEXT TO THE LAKE WHERE IT ALL STARTED! I GOT ON MY SKY-CYCLE AND FLEW HERE A.S.A.P.!
I APPRECIATE THAT, SALLY! SAY-- WHAT ABOUT--
C'MON...BETTER GET BACK BEFORE ROBOTNIK COMES SNOOPING!
OKAY... :ahem: I WAS WONDERING IF YOU--
KNUCKLES WENT FLYING IN ANOTHER DIRECTION, OKAY? NEVER MIND OUR PAST!* JUST DROP IT!
OH YEAH... HIM! NO, I WAS WONDERING IF WE HAD ANY CHILI DOGS?
OH... SORRY...
*I'LL BET YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THIS TANTALIZING TIDBIT! WRITE "SONIC-GRAMS"-Scott
THE END? ALMOST...


SOME TIME LATER...
WELL, WELL... LOOK WHO'S HOME!
WHAT'S NEW, MIGHTY?
YOU ARE, RAD RED! HYPER-KNUCKLES' BATTLE WITH SUPER SONIC IS THE TALK OF THE ISLAND!
OH REALLY?
YEAH! THEY SAY YOU TORE EACH OTHER UP! THEY SAY THE ZONE COLLAPSED, TAKING ALL THE RINGS AND EMERALDS WITH IT!
IS THAT WHAT "THEY" SAY?
WELL I SAY SOMETHING DIFFERENT...
...LIKE "MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!"
FULL SPEED AHEAD, KNUX-- YOU'VE GOT THE GREEN LIGHT!
BUT WILL THE ECHIDNA'S QUEST FOR KNOWLEDGE END THERE? OR MIGHT THIS BE A PRELUDE TO ANOTHER MIND-BOGGLING ADVENTURE? STAY TUNED...

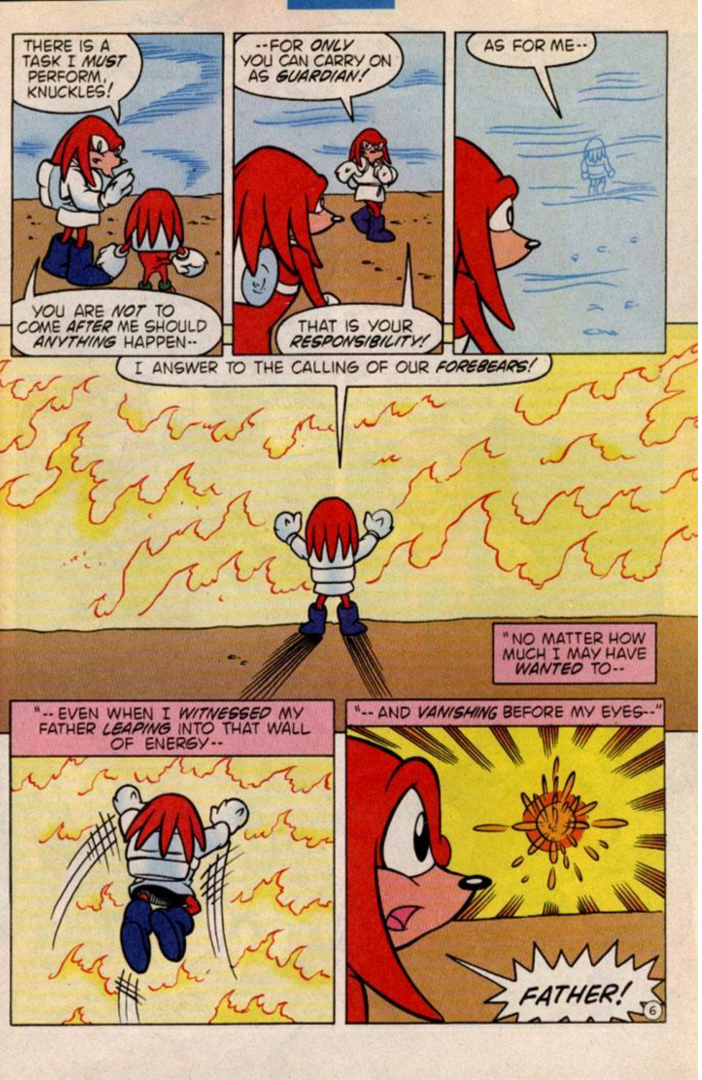

SONIC'S FRIENDLY NEMESIS
KNUCKLES™
FATHERS & SONS
...AND SOME DAY SOON, MY SON, IT'LL FALL ONTO YOUR SHOULDERS--
--THE MANTLE OF GUARDIAN OF THE FLOATING ISLAND--
--AND YOU ALONE WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL THAT LIES AROUND YOU!
WOW!
SCRIPT: MIKE KANTEROVICH & KEN PENDERS
PENCILS: KEN PENDERS
INKS: HARVO
YES, IT IS AN AWESOME TASK-- HANDED DOWN THROUGH THE GENERATIONS FROM OUR ANCESTORS!
NOW, FOLLOW ME--
--FOR THIS IS WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT!
A SECRET PASSAGE?
TO WHERE, FATHER?
TO ZOOT CHUTE

WHERE FEW HAVE GONE BEFORE, KNUCKLES!
OW!
I CAN SEE WHY! THAT'S ROUGH, ON THE OL' TUCKUS!
BUT NOW THAT WE'RE HERE, FATHER--
--JUST WHERE IS HERE? AND WHAT--IS THAT?!
THAT, MY DEAR SON-- IS YOUR LEGACY!
BEHOLD THE CHAOS EMERALD-- WITH POWER TO KEEP OUR ENTIRE ISLAND ALOFT OVER THE SURFACE OF MOBIUS BELOW!
IS THAT ALL IT DOES?
NO! THERE IS MORE-- MUCH MORE-- TO THE STORY--
--BUT THERE IS ONLY SO MUCH YOU CAN LEARN AT ANY GIVEN TIME!
FOR NOW, LET'S JUST SAY YOU'VE BEEN GIVEN THE BASICS--
2

--FOR ONLY WHEN YOU HAVE ALL THE PIECES WILL YOU BE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND!
"--BE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND!"
INTERESTING!
NOW THAT I THINK OF IT, ARCHIMEDES DID SOUND A LOT LIKE MY DAD!
TO BE MORE SPECIFIC--THE WORDS SOUNDED LIKE DAD, BUT THE SOUND OF ARCHIMEDES' VOICE SOUNDED--
--WELL, DIFFERENT!
COULD THAT MEAN THAT-- NAH, IT COULDN'T BE--
THERE'S NO WAY DAD COULD'VE--
BESIDES, THIS ISN'T HELPING ME FIND THE CHAOTIX!*
BLUNDERING AROUND, HOWEVER, ISN'T GONNA DO A FAT LOT OF GOOD EITHER!
DAD WOULD EXPECT ME TO USE MY HEAD AND THINK--
--STUDY THE PROBLEM BEFORE YOU--
* THEY WERE KIDNAPPED IN KNUCKLES' CHAOTIX SPECIAL #1--SCOTT
3

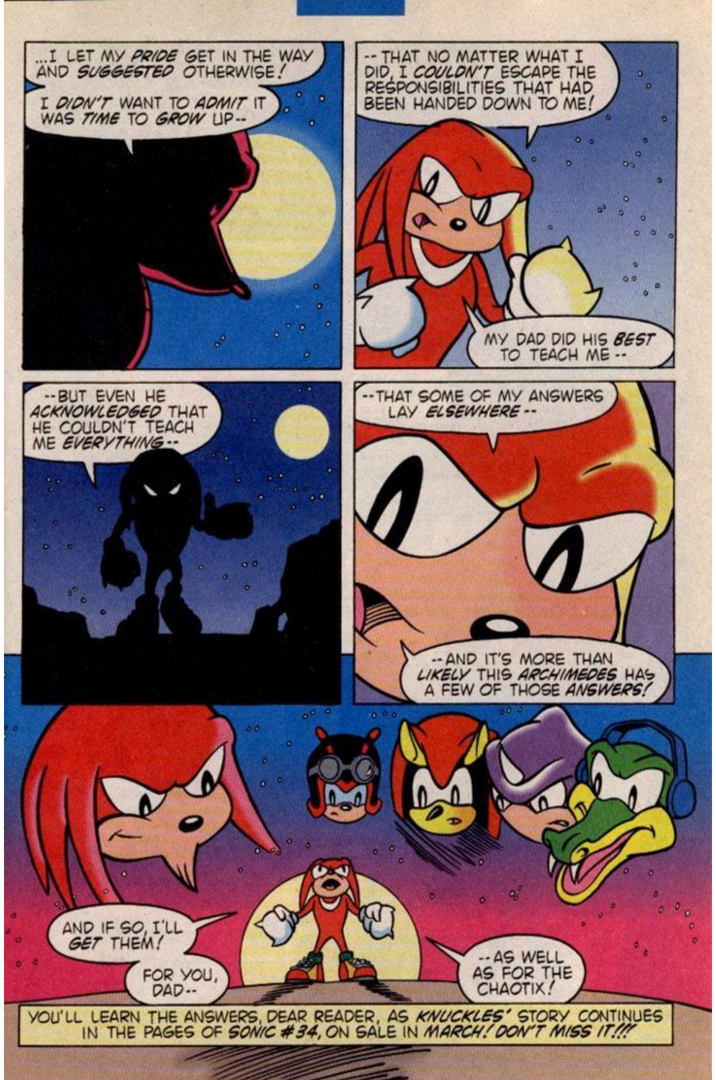
-- AND DETERMINE THE BEST WAY TO RESOLVE THE SITUATION!
IN THIS CASE, WE HAVE A MYSTERIOUS GLOBULAR OBJECT FLYING AROUND!
WE HAVEN'T ANY CLUE TO ITS ORIGINS OR INTENTIONS!
SO, MY DEAR KNUCKLES, WHAT WOULD YOU SAY IS OUR FIRST COURSE OF ACTION?
HMMM...
I WOULD...
I GUESS I WOULD WATCH AND WAIT TO SEE WHAT IT DOES FIRST!
VERY GOOD, LAD!
THEN WHAT?
I-- I DON'T KNOW! I GUESS IT DEPENDS!
ON WHAT?
OH, LIKE MAYBE HAVING TO DEAL WITH IT UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL--
IN EFFECT, FORCING YOU TO MAKE A DECISION! IS THAT CORRECT?
4

YES, SIR!
AND WHAT HAVE YOU DECIDED?
I'M NOT GONNA TAKE ANY CHANCES!
I'M GOING TO--
SMASH!
CHOKE-- KOFF-KOFF
YOU'VE FORGOTTEN ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT LESSONS I'VE TAUGHT YOU--
"--KNOW YOUR ENEMY!"
I MUST ADMIT, MY FATHER ALWAYS WOULD SHOW ME THE WAY--
--IF ONLY I WOULD PAY ATTENTION!
STILL, EVEN DAD COULDN'T PREPARE FOR EVERYTHING!
AND NO MATTER HOW HARD I TRY--
--I'LL NEVER FORGET WHAT HAPPENED WHEN WE CAME TO--
--THE FORBIDDEN ZONE, MY SON!
WHY ARE WE HERE, FATHER?
5



THERE IS A TASK I MUST PERFORM, KNUCKLES!
YOU ARE NOT TO COME AFTER ME SHOULD ANYTHING HAPPEN--
--FOR ONLY YOU CAN CARRY ON AS GUARDIAN!
THAT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY!
AS FOR ME--
I ANSWER TO THE CALLING OF OUR FOREBEARS!
"NO MATTER HOW MUCH I MAY HAVE WANTED TO--
"-- EVEN WHEN I WITNESSED MY FATHER LEAPING INTO THAT WALL OF ENERGY--
"-- AND VANISHING BEFORE MY EYES--"
FATHER!
6

--I STAYED MY GROUND AND HONORED MY FATHER'S WISHES!
IT WAS THE HARDEST THING I'D EVER DONE--
BUT IF MY DAD COULD MAKE SACRIFICES TIME AFTER TIME--
--THEN HOW COULD I NOT DO LIKEWISE?
IT WASN'T ANY PICNIC FOR AWHILE AFTER THAT!
I'D KEEP FINDING NEW WAYS TO MESS UP!
LIKE, ALLOWING ROBOTNIK TO MAKE A DUPE OUTTA ME!*
*REFER TO THE CLASSIC "THIS ISLAND HEDGEHOG" IN SONIC #13 - Scott
THINGS GOT SO BAD I HAD TO DEPEND ON THAT STUPID HEDGEHOG TO SAVE MY TAIL!
SLAM!
WHAM!
AND WHEN HE SUGGESTED I FORM THE CHAOTIX INTO A TEAM...*
7
*CHECK OUT "THE CHAOS EFFECT" IN KNUCKLES' CHAOTIX SPECIAL #1 - Scott


...I LET MY PRIDE GET IN THE WAY AND SUGGESTED OTHERWISE!
I DIDN'T WANT TO ADMIT IT WAS TIME TO GROW UP--
--THAT NO MATTER WHAT I DID, I COULDN'T ESCAPE THE RESPONSIBILITIES THAT HAD BEEN HANDED DOWN TO ME!
MY DAD DID HIS BEST TO TEACH ME--
--BUT EVEN HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT HE COULDN'T TEACH ME EVERYTHING--
--THAT SOME OF MY ANSWERS LAY ELSEWHERE--
--AND IT'S MORE THAN LIKELY THIS ARCHIMEDES HAS A FEW OF THOSE ANSWERS!
AND IF SO, I'LL GET THEM!
FOR YOU, DAD--
--AS WELL AS FOR THE CHAOTIX!
YOU'LL LEARN THE ANSWERS, DEAR READER, AS KNUCKLES' STORY CONTINUES IN THE PAGES OF SONIC #34, ON SALE IN MARCH! DON'T MISS IT!!!

-MULTIVERSAL MONITORS-
HIT-MONKEY
MANNERS.
MORBIUS
NINTENDO DS
THQ
-EARTHS IN JEOPARDY-

"SOMETIMES DOING THE
RIGHT THING IS MESSY"

PROTECT
THE
PLANET
DISEASES OF THE CLAW AND EGG SAC

HEROES FOR HOPE